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The American University in Cairo

**Assessing Community Based Education in Upper Egypt:  
Failure and Success**

A Thesis Submitted by

***Amira Abdel Fattah Hussein***

To Department of Political Science


May, 2016

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The degree of Master of Arts

Has been approved by

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May 23, 2016

Date

The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**ASSESSING COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION IN UPPER EGYPT**

**FAILURE AND SUCCESS**

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*The Department of Political Science*

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**Amira Abdel Fattah Hussein**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to us (myself and my colleagues in the Development World), as a reminder and maybe a warning note... It takes a lot more than good intentions for “Sustainable Development” to happen... It won’t happen if we “ourselves” did not change the way we deal with Donors, Government, and Communities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank Professor Ibrahim El Nur, my thesis supervisor for his support and understanding. I would also like to thank my dear colleagues Yousra Hamroush, Hatem Zayed, Mona Soliman, and Michael Fam who took some of their time to read and comment on my drafts and to Mona Kotb and Elham Zakaria for their support in the field visits to *Talt* and *Hoore* villages. Finally, I am very grateful to my friend and mentor Bassem Hassan for his sincere support and advice.

## **ABSTRACT**

Community based education has been used in different developing countries in the context of the Education for All (EFA) commitments as a mechanism to increase access and enrollment for basic education in remote and rural areas. It has been introduced to Egypt in 1992 through a partnership between MOE, INGOs, such as UNICEF, USAID, CARE, and local communities. This study examines the current prevailing perception about the community education model as being a successful alternative for public primary education in Egypt in marginalized areas and for vulnerable and marginalized groups mainly girls. It argues that in spite of achieving satisfactory results in the beginning, the model failed to be sustainable and to achieve its targeted results on both the short and long term. On the basis of the assessment of the model in two villages in Upper Egypt, *Hoore* in Minya and *Talt* in Benisuif, it can be claimed that there are a number of reasons behind the unsatisfactory results of community education in the last 10 years. These reasons include three main aspects: first, the lack of a comprehensive vision at MOE level, including the scattered policies and regulations governing the model; second, the distorted methodologies of implementation applied by different INGOs and local NGOs; and third, the weak role of the community in managing the schools. As a prerequisite for success, MOE should have an accurate mapping of the educational needs including the targeted areas and number of dropouts in each governorate. This information should be the guide for NGOs working on community education to avoid duplication and competition. Policies should be revised, unified, and applied efficiently on all implementing bodies with no exceptions. Community Education facilitators should be well trained and well paid. Supervision and assessment mechanisms should be in place and curriculums should be revised to ensure the core of the model which its flexibility and ability to address the needs of different local groups. Finally, the important role of local communities should be reclaimed and promoted.



## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Community-based educational (CBE) programs have been implemented in different models and formats in many developing countries as one of the methods of empowering the poor through education especially girls in rural and underserved communities.<sup>1</sup> Community-based education CBE is based on the students' ability to recognize and support the needs of the surrounding community where parents, community leaders, administrators, school board members, and citizens are an integral part in the development, production, implementation, and assessment of the educational service. Christine J. Villani and Douglas Atkins believe that community-based education promotes interdependence and leads towards "educational and community practices" which, by turn, have the potential to impact people's lives on a larger scale. They argue that education has to be viewed as a process for creating "life-long learners." In community-based education, learning modalities are based on students' needs and the venue of learning which reflects the students' desires and community environment.<sup>2</sup>

There are different forms and models of community-based education; one of the most popular forms of community education is the multi-grade schools. The multi-grade schools teach more than one grade level within one classroom or have more than one classroom under the guidance of one teacher. These forms of schooling are used in remote and rural areas where resources are limited, communities are small, and teachers are not available.<sup>3</sup>

As many developing countries were striving to promote "basic education for all" under the Education for All (EFA)<sup>4</sup> commitments, the multi-grade system was widely implemented in many developing countries such as Vietnam, Columbia, Peru, Sri Lanka and many other countries in Latin America and Asia. It was also used in countries with

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<sup>1</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*, 141

<sup>2</sup> Villani and Atkins, "*Community Based Education*", 121

<sup>3</sup> Ninnas, et al, *In Pursuit of EFA: Expanding and Enhancing Multi-grade Schooling in Bhutan*, 185

<sup>4</sup> The world conference on EFA, Jomtien, Thailand, (1990)

well-established educational systems such as USA, Canada and Australia, in addition to being appropriate for refugee camps and emergency settings.<sup>5</sup>

In Egypt, CBE was introduced in the 1990s to be part of the education system of Egypt within the government's commitment to the Education for All (EFA) main objective which is expanding basic education to all children, youth, and adults. CBE was introduced to provide education opportunities for girls who missed education whether because they were never enrolled in or were dropped out of schools and are living in remote and rural areas. Thus, this model was introduced to provide quality based education that can empower girls and communities.<sup>6</sup>

This study focuses on determining the main features and pillars of the CBE model introduced to Egypt by international community in the 1990s as an educational reform mechanism. It aims at examining the CBE model after almost 25 years of implementation to assess its compliance to the objectives declared at the time of introduction.

The quality of the existing community-based education models will be assessed focusing on girls' Multi Grade Schools (MGS) in Minya and Benisuif in order to determine to what extent CBE in Egypt has offered a successful alternative to formal regular schooling in rural and marginalized areas especially in Upper Egypt. The field work will focus on MGS in two villages in Upper Egypt; Talt in Benisuif governorate and Hoore in Minya governorate.

Community education as an education reform policy will be addressed within the wider scope of education reform policies in Egypt focusing on the influence of various actors and methods of communicating education reforms on the local level.

The study shall also propose recommendations to improve the quality of community education reflecting on the implications for national government policy and donor aid policy based on civil society's experience.

Throughout the study, the following research questions will be answered:

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<sup>5</sup> Ninnes et al., *In Pursuit of EFA: Expanding and Enhancing Multi-grade Schooling in Bhutan*, 185

<sup>6</sup> Langsten, "Community-based Education in Egypt", 1

- What are the results of different studies assessing the CBE experience in the last 25 years?
- What are the main problems of the main stream Egyptian educational system?
- What is the philosophy and rationale of CBE in general and in Egypt in particular?
- What is the MOE vision of CBE and what is the legal structure related to CBE?
- What are the main pillars of the model?
- To what extent are the main pillars of CBE respected today?
- How are reform policies communicated on the local level? And who are the main actors?
- How could CBE be improved to better perform its role? And what is the role of civil society, INGOs and donors?

**Hypothesis:** *Community education did not fulfill its mandate in providing quality educational opportunities for children, especially girls, in marginalized and rural areas in Upper Egypt due to lack of vision and problems related to quality.*

### **Research Methodology:**

The study will use different tools combining primary and secondary sources that involve qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with relevant stakeholders such as: MOE and CBE Units on the national level, MOE and CBE units in Minya and Benisuif educational districts (*moudiryat*), teachers/ facilitators (*mouyasirat*), girls attending CBE schools, and NGOs implementing CBE projects such as CARE, PLAN, and Misr ElKhier. FGDs will be based on a discussion of a number of questions designed for each category of stakeholders. Field work is based on the FGDs implemented in the village of Talt in El Fashn district in Benisuif and Hoore in Malawy

district in Minya. These two villages were chosen to complement the work done earlier by both Mohamed Menza and Ray Langsten in other three villages in Minya and Benisuif. To be able to compare the current status to the one at the model's early phases of implementation, MGS that were established earlier through cooperation between donors, INGOs, local NGOs, and communities and are currently under MoE supervision will be selected. A participant/observant approach will be used where researcher takes part in the interactive dealings of the research.

The study will also build on some of the results that emerged from the recent quantitative and qualitative research and education projects' evaluation studies implemented by NGOs and INGOs especially CARE Egypt in the last 10 years.

A contextual analysis of documents highlighting Egypt's educational vision will take place focusing on: MOE strategic educational plan; Policies, regulations, decrees related to CBE. Articles related to education in the Constitution and International Human Rights documents and education budget. Secondary sources will include books, journal articles, development reports, and NGOs websites.

*Literature related to education in general and community education in particular will be reviewed in **Chapter II** accentuating: **a)** the importance of education as a right and as a mean for social change, **b)** the relation between education and democracy, and the different views of different scholars and theories. **c)** Empowerment, Community Participation, and Social Capital theory and its relation to education. While **Chapter III** will provide a background and an overview of education in Egypt; the different education visions and ideologies affecting the education sector in Egypt since Mohamed Ali till our present time. It will also address the main problems of primary education in Egypt focusing on problems of access, quality, and systems as these problems were the reason behind the adoption of the CBE model as a reform mechanism. For a better understanding of the CBE model **Chapter IV** will shed the light on CBE; its definition and objectives, its different models, and its legal system. **Chapter V** is divided into two section; the first section provides a conceptual frame*

*work about quality of education and its different definitions including criteria and indicators produced by the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NAQAEE) for the quality of CBE schools in Egypt. It will also introduce the main pillars of the CBE model as defined by Malaak Zaalouk at the early phase of the model. The second section will include the field work implemented in two villages in Upper Egypt (Talt in El Fashn, Benisuif) and (Hoore in Malawy, Minya) to assess the current situation and quality of educational services provided by the CBE schools in these two villages. Assessment will be done against the main pillars of the model as defined by Zaalouk. As international NGOs and donors played an important role in the designing and implementation of the model. **Chapter VI** will highlight the issue of international aid and education and how education reforms are communicated. Finally, **chapter VII** will provide recommendations and suggestions for improving the current status of CBE schools in Egypt for both Ministry of Education and Civil Society Organizations.*

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is an empowering right; it is considered an asset in itself as it helps people to realize other rights. Since this study is mainly focusing on a particular form of education which is “Community Based Education,” this section will address the main two components of the term “education” and “community.” It will try to highlight the importance of education as a right and as a mean for social change. It will look into the relation between education and democracy and the different views of different scholars and theories. Empowerment, Community Participation, and Social Capital theory and its relation to education will also be tackled as it provides a frame of analysis to why the model is or is not sustainable in Egypt.

### **Why is Education Important?**

Many scholars linked between high levels of educational attainment and democracy. This is because education creates a culture of democracy which leads to greater prosperity. According to Lipset, education enables people to realize the importance of tolerance, prevents them from falling into the traps of extremism, and increases their ability to make rational choices.<sup>7</sup>

Education has been considered by governments, as well as individuals, as a “vehicle to increase national and individual incomes and bring economic growth” and as a socialization tool to change and modernize values, attitudes and social and economic behavior.<sup>8</sup>

International Human Rights Instruments recognized the “Right to Education” as a basic right; article 13 of the ICESCR,<sup>9</sup> articles 28,<sup>10</sup> and 29<sup>11</sup> of the CRC highlighted the importance of education as a “state responsibility.”

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<sup>7</sup> Acemoglu et al., "From Education to Democracy?" 44-49

<sup>8</sup> Gould, *People and Education*, 3

<sup>9</sup> Article 13 -ICESCR: 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They

Although many educationalists point out a positive relationship between education and democracy, this positive relationship depends on the type of education offered, the systems, the structures, and the processes.<sup>12</sup>

According to John Dewey, an education system that integrates democratic values and beliefs can create the environment for students to flourish. It can produce free human

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*further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. 2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right,:* (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all; (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education. (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education. (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education. (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

<sup>10</sup> Article 28- CRC: 1. States' Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: a. make primary education compulsory and available free to all. b. Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need. c. Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means. d. Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children. e. Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates. 2. States' Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

<sup>11</sup> Article 29- CRC: States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: a. the development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. b. The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. c. The development of respect for the child's parents; his or her own cultural identity, language and values of the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and of civilizations different from his or her own. d. The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society; in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all people such as ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin. e. The development of respect for the natural environment.

<sup>12</sup> Harbor, *Education and International Development*, 94.

beings who appreciate liberty over domination and authoritarianism. In addition, he believes democracy can be achieved through education.<sup>13</sup> Schooling is a political socialization process and an institution where political culture can be transmitted; this “socialization process can be a vehicle for social and political change,” thus early childhood is very important as childhood experiences have a great impact on the relationship of citizens with their political systems.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, schools have powerful influence over individuals’ mindsets as students learn the basics of social relationships with their teachers and peers, and these daily interactions “affect the way social norms are learned.”<sup>15</sup>

Other thinkers and scholars like Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault emphasized the relationship between education and political rights; they believed that education could be a tool in the hands of political systems to control and dominate people. Schools for Gramsci are part of the “system’s political hegemony” over individuals. Thus, educational reforms cannot be provided by the dominant political structure, for real change to take place the “entire hegemonic structure must be completely dismantled”<sup>16</sup> Foucault believes that schools are a place where students learn to be “governable human beings,” and he perceives schools as “normalizing institutions.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, an education system could be a “socialization institution” or a “normalizing institution depending on the norms and values integrated and the systems in place.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Education as the Exercise of Domination vs Education as the Practice of Freedom:**

In his work, Paulo Freire criticized the existing education forms that are not helping people to overcome oppression; as it is not enabling them to recognize their oppression, its causes, and how to overcome it. He advocated for an education system that is based on critical dialogue where learners recognize the teacher as a learner as

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<sup>13</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 12,13

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 15

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 28, 29

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 28, 29

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 28, 29



well. According to Freire, education systems, which are part of an authoritarian regime, will reproduce the ideas and interests of the oppressor. These education systems are referred to as “banking education” through which the learner is turned into a container where he or she is filled in by the teacher. In this system, the teacher knows everything while the students know nothing: the teacher talks and students listen; the teacher chooses and the students adapt. That is to say, the teachers are considered the subject of the learning process and the students are only objects.<sup>19</sup>

Freire has stated that when students store knowledge, they are less likely to develop critical consciousness of the world around them, and they are ready to accept the world as it is; in this case education is considered as an “exercise of domination.” These education systems need to be replaced by alternative education systems that are based on dialogue and mutual learning between teachers and students. Education “as a practice of freedom” is the kind of education that promotes problem analyzing and solving where teachers and students are both conscious about the problems and challenges of the world around them.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, behaviorist theories are still the base of most educational approaches that assume that learning occurs in stages built on one another, and that curriculums need to be designed to reflect a “hierarchy of goals” which are being taught to students using direct instructions. In these approaches, teachers are considered the “source of knowledge transition.” According to Zaalouk, this approach to education is inherited from the industrial period, where only few people are required for planning and thinking, while the masses are only required to implement and follow. This traditional approach has led to certain assumptions; some of which are still valid today such as assuming that: first, learning takes place in schools only and ignoring non-school based experiences. Second, learning requires teaching ignoring self-learning and long life learning experiences. Third, learning is a student-teacher relationship (adult-child). Fourth, learning requires listening to teachers’ instructions and reading text books which are measurable through texts and scores. Besides, educational improvement is limited to

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<sup>19</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development*, 90, 91

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 91

teachers training without taking into consideration learning processes which are figured in school management, systems and policies in place. Such approach to education has created schools that are not capable of producing self-motivated individuals.<sup>21</sup>

The traditionalists consider schools as “instructional sites” ignoring its political and cultural features. Henry Giroux claims that they have failed because they did not address the relationships between school and society in general; they did not focus on issues of power, domination and liberation.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, many theorists spoke about the concept of the “Hidden Curriculum” which refers to the unstated norms, values, and beliefs that are “transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom life.”<sup>23</sup> According to Elizabeth Valance, the term is defined as the “non-academic but educationally significant consequences of schooling. It refers to the social control function of schooling.”<sup>24</sup>

For the traditionalists, the “Hidden Curriculum” is the reproduction and transmission of the prevailing norms, values, and traditions. Such function is accepted as a positive function of the schooling process according to them. Thus, schools are places where students learn important “societal norms and skills.”<sup>25</sup> On the other hand and according to the radical educationalists, social relations at schools reflect the social relations in the society. Thence, they focus on the political function of schooling and the external factors outside the school that influence the schooling process.<sup>26</sup>

According to Giroux, “schooling is being viewed as a social process in which elements of structure and agency come together as societal practices ... School, as both an institution and a set of social practices, must be seen in its integral connections with the realities of other socio-economic and political institutions that control the production, distribution, and legitimation of economic and cultural capital in the dominant society.” Teachers should reject the “discourse of

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<sup>21</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 13-15.

<sup>22</sup> Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, 3,4

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 47

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 47

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 48,49

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 56, 57

the traditional learning theory” and put “notions of critique and conflict” in their teaching pedagogies.<sup>27</sup>

Giroux agrees with Kohl, that schools are not going to create a new society or that a new social order will be created through schools. Both agree that schools are a part of a new system which is created through cooperation between all segments of society. Instead of focusing on the question of whether schools can change societies or not, the focus should be on what will be the role of teachers in establishing a new and permanent order. This emphasizes the performance of teachers who can display an external and internal presence inside and outside the school.<sup>28</sup>

Giroux differentiates between schooling and education highlighting that schooling happens within institutions that belong to the state and serves its interests, and it is linked to the government either through funding or certification processes. Thus, radical teachers are often confronted with challenges that would enable them to develop critical pedagogies.<sup>29</sup> As a result, radical pedagogy should be guided by faith and passion to create a better world, but not in the utopian sense.<sup>30</sup>

Accordingly, the needs of the modern era led to the emergence of new modern education theories that are based on the learner’s interests and experiences, believing in the capacity of the learner to learn and to teach himself/herself. New theories of constructivism, socio-cognition, and multiple intelligences took into their account learners differences and needs and, above all, aimed at making learning a pleasant experience.<sup>31</sup>

As mentioned by the “Holistic Educationalists,” there are a number of important principles that are essential to the education crisis of today; some of which include: considering the “educator” as a facilitator of learning. The main purpose of education is human development and developing the individuals’ relationship with himself/herself, family, community, and universe thus creating human beings who are active and engaged

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 62

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 234

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 241

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 242

<sup>31</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 15.

with their communities' problems, and then education would have achieved its target to be a holistic activity.<sup>32</sup>

### **Education for Social Change: Movement education:**

The main principles of Freire's works is reflected in what has been introduced by Zaalouk as "Movement Education"; this is an education model that enables learners to define problems and contribute to its solutions where education is considered a fertile ground for the emergence of movements calling and leading for reforms. Accordingly, the role of education in social movements would be to help individuals to determine their needs, mobilize resources, and organize their activities in cooperation with their communities to reach their objectives.<sup>33</sup>

In her book Zaalouk introduced community schools as a "comprehensive socialization institution" which can lead to deep changes in the targeted communities; changes that can contribute to a social movement. Zaalouk defines social movements on the basis of Turner and Killian's definition which focuses on both change and continuity, defining social movements as: "a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or group of which it is a part."<sup>34</sup> However, for a social movement to succeed, it needs to create a "demand for change" and "popular mobilization." Contemporary social movements focus on empowering the people and redefining power structures and decision making processes aiming at developing community based on initiatives calling for democracy. There are two approaches to define social movements: the new social movement approach (focusing on cultural aspects), and the resource mobilization approach (focusing on political aspects). According to Zaalouk, a comprehensive approach that includes both is the right one.<sup>35</sup>

Left Education theorists believe that educators should be active agents for social change where text books should be discussing issues related to class conflicts, racism, and other important socio-economic issues. The work of Henry Giroux focuses

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 16

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 10

<sup>34</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy Of Empowerment*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 36

on how schools can be transformed into institutions that could lead to the transformation of the society itself. He claimed that schools cannot be analyzed away from the socioeconomic context of the communities they are operating in.<sup>36</sup> He advocated for new approaches of schooling that are different from those criticized earlier by left education theorists where schools are considered as “sorting and tracking institutes” and children of working and lower classes are taught and treated differently from other children at the same age.<sup>37</sup>

According to Giroux, education must move beyond reproductive approaches that serve the interests of domination and hegemony. In schools, hegemony is not only practiced through books and instruction, but also through the practical experiences and mode of control. It is important to focusing not only on how schools can “sustain and produce ideologies”, but also on how students and teachers interact, resist, negotiate, or accept these ideologies.<sup>38</sup>

According to both Freire and Giroux, knowledge is not neutral; it is a result of interactions related to norms and interests. Freire deals with knowledge as a liberating tool which enables students to “generate their own meanings,” and “reflect on the process of thinking itself.”<sup>39</sup> In his book “The Pedagogy of Freedom,” Freire stresses on the importance of teaching as a mean of producing not transferring knowledge. He argues that students and teachers, who are both the subject of the education process, cannot isolate themselves from the social, cultural, and economic conditions of their communities.<sup>40</sup>

### **Social Capital and Education:**

A number of educationalists consider social capital to be one of the reasons why some schools or students perform better than others. There are studies that link social

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<sup>36</sup> Hudson, *Education for Change*, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 3

<sup>39</sup> Hudson, *Education for Change*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, 30,31

capital to high student performance and quality of education. Social capital is the “intangible resource that emerges or fails to emerge from social relations and social structures.”<sup>41</sup> Many theorists define social capital to include networks, relationships, solidarity, cooperation, trust, sympathy ...etc. The linkage between education and social capital is based on the assumption that schools are social environments where education outcomes are linked to social interactions.<sup>42</sup>

Social capital emerges from interaction. This assumption is obvious within the work of John Dewey in his book “The School and Society” highlighting the role of the school. Dewey realized that there is a great need to link the academic books to the real challenges of his time (the industrial period of the 1900) or books will lose their value and will not enable students to solve their problems in the future. According to Dewey, social capital is positive and it is created when “individuals connect to others in meaningful ways.”<sup>43</sup> He linked reading and writing and math to social capital as they are important to create valuable connection between the individuals and their communities. Without these skills, individuals will be “locked out” and with time they will be left out behind others who will advance economically.<sup>44</sup> When individuals interact, they produce norms, expectations, obligations, information channels, and trust whereas when accumulated, it contributes to shaping the relationship among individuals. Thus, education according to Dewey is a process of transmission where teachers and adults interact with students and younger generations to transmit important norms.<sup>45</sup>

According to L. J. Hanifan, school is the center of the community. In the school community, parents, teachers, administrators, and students interact with one another on different issues related to children being in school. These interactions could create positive social capital to support the school environment or could create harmful social capital and influence the school negatively.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Plagens, *Social Capital and Education*, 40

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 42, 45, 49

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 42, 45, 49

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 44

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 51

Scholars emphasize on the fact that the presence or absence of social capital can result into different outcomes. They differentiate between two extreme communities; first, the “anomic” or “privatistic” community, where low levels of social interaction is taking place and ‘individualistic’ and private interests dominate, where there is a lack of community identification or concern. Second, the “solidaristic” community, where high levels of social interaction are taking place and the interests of community as a whole are what matters to individuals. People are born in different types of communities and they transmit the same norms and values to other generations whether (privatistic or solidaristic), that is the reason Dewey believes that communities must be in “a constant reweaving of its fabrics” with the schools in the center of this reweaving process.<sup>47</sup>

Consequently, individuals raised within high social capital communities are more “socially cooperative”: they have high concern and interest about their community and its problems, they are aware of their communities’ needs, they identify with their communities, and they trust each other. Hence, they develop “strong feelings of genuine concern”, which are the main reasons behind community action.<sup>48</sup>

In a school community with high social capital, parents, teachers, and students trust each other. This positive environment and community of trust is reflected on the education process making it more efficient and of better quality. Thus, a parent who decides to take action regarding addressing a school problem by raising funds to fix a broken lab or a toilet is to be found easily in these communities.<sup>49</sup>

Accordingly, communities are defined by their common aims and aspirations not by geography, and schools are at the center of communities where interactions and “reweaving of social fabrics” is taking place.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 46,47

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 53,54

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 56

<sup>50</sup> Plagens, *Social Capital and Education*, 58

## Community Participation:

One of the main features of the CBE model is the engagement of the community where communities are encouraged to engage with schools. According to Catherine A. Simon, it is important to determine exactly what the term community means, whether it is a “geographical area, physical neighborhood or a group of people linked by common interest,” highlighting the fact that living next to each other is not enough to create a community.<sup>51</sup>

Others differentiate between “Genuine Participation,” where participation is voluntary and members have the ability to participate in decision making processes and have power to make important decisions, and “Pseudo –Participation” where participation is just a consultation process and participants are expected to approve already taken decisions” for instance the aim of participation would be mere “collection of resources for school construction and maintenance.” According to Laila el Baradei, community participation in education in Egypt can fall between these two ends depending on the degree of engagement of community members in important school matters.<sup>52</sup>

With the new millennium, the Egyptian government reform programs started to shift their efforts from focusing only on increasing of enrollment through building schools, to be focusing also on quality related issues introducing new values and norms such as decentralization and community participation. There was pressure towards higher levels of interaction between schools and communities; in 2005 a centralized ministerial decree (# 258) regarding the formation of board of trustees (BOTs) in schools was issued aiming at enhancing community participation in education. Accordingly, all public schools nationwide had to establish BOTs overnight.<sup>53</sup>

It can be claimed that the sudden interest of MOE in community participation in education is related to the pressure of international community stemming from a number

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<sup>51</sup> Simon, "Extended Schooling and Community Education", 21

<sup>52</sup> El Baradei and Amin, "Community Participation in Education", 108

<sup>53</sup> Ibid



of “push factors” such as the “pedagogical push factors” which are, in turn, related to positive aspects that can be achieved in education via community participation as “schools alone cannot be held responsible for teaching students all what they need to learn.” There is also a need to cooperate with families and communities since students spend a lot of time with families and communities. This in addition to the “developmental push factor” which is related to the international discourse of education reform, where community participation has become the guarantee for projects ownership, and community participation is requested in all project phases starting from design. Moreover, there was the “human rights push factor” which is related to considering quality of education as a main human right highlighting the fact that quality of education will not be achieved unless schools are held accountable to parents and communities.<sup>54</sup>

According to Laila el Baradei, there is a strong link between decentralization and community’s participation in the education sector. Through decentralization there is a need to “transfer decision making powers of MOE to intermediate governments, local governments, communities, and schools.” By making decision taking entities closer to local people and communities, community participation will be the only way to hold the decentralized institutions accountable to people.<sup>55</sup>

### **Education and Empowerment:**

Empowerment of youth, especially girls, was an important aspect of the CBE model. Empowerment, according to the limited but popular definition, is linked to “individual’s feelings of influence and control. Others like Zimmerman highlight psychological empowerment, which is more related to skills, knowledge and behavior. Psychological empowerment is composed of three main components: first, “Intrapersonal” empowerment; focusing on the individual feelings of control and belief in being effective. This component can be enhanced through helping youth and students determine their personal areas of strength.<sup>56</sup> Second, “Interactional” empowerment, which includes understanding the social and political environment behind power systems

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 112

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 114

<sup>56</sup> Gullan, “*The Role of Empowerment in a School-Based Community Service Program,*” 667

and mechanisms; it requires students to have the knowledge and skills that are important for success. These skills can be acquired by teaching students how to access resources and power systems. Third, “Behavioral” component which is related to actions and self-control exercises, where students act in an empowered manner, enhanced through providing decision making opportunities for youth and students.<sup>57</sup>

Some believe that “Empowerment” theory shares similarities with “self-determination” theory which focuses on the importance of environment in supporting or hampering the individual’s efforts to be competent and independent. However, the focus on skills and information is one of the aspects that differentiate empowerment theory from other motivational theories. In empowerment, one should have the ability and knowledge needed to act efficiently. Thus, it is important to increase youth and students’ knowledge of the social and political environment and provide them with skills to discover the systems of power.<sup>58</sup>

On the basis of these thoughts, Malak Zaalouk introduced community based education “as a catalyst for deeper social and educational transformation.”<sup>59</sup> CBE was introduced as a solution to the many problems of education in Egypt. Zaalouk believed in CBE as a social movement where communities are engaged in a dialogue with policy makers to define their own vision of what they really need. She believed that community school projects in Egypt could become a catalyst for a sustainable and deeply grounded social movement which can significantly contribute to educational reform on a national scale.<sup>60</sup>

According to Malak Zaalouk in her book “*The Pedagogy of Empowerment: Community Schools as a Social movement in Egypt*”, there are two approaches to educational reform. The first approach is the project approach or the “isolated pilot approach” which focuses on improving certain aspects of the educational process such as improving textbooks, classrooms, enrollment rates...etc. The project approach was the favorite approach for national and international actors in the field of education as it

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 667,669

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 668,669

<sup>59</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 162

<sup>60</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 6

seemed easier to manage and can contribute to quick wins. However, the results from this approach were very modest. On the other hand resides the other approach which is the “movement approach” also called the “structural approach” which focuses on the root causes; it aims at creating a “reform support infrastructure” and enabling environment for reform, thus leading to sustainable changes.<sup>61</sup>

### **Community Based Education: An Education Reform Initiative:**

National education systems in many developing countries have managed to provide primary education to the majority of children but failed to provide “quality education.” The traditionally managed public education systems failed to meet the “Education for All” objectives of: providing access to quality education, ensuring completion, and achieving measurable learning outcomes.<sup>62</sup> Community based education was introduced as a direct response to the universal constraints facing almost all developing countries to achieve the EFA goals such as the bureaucratic centrally managed systems, the lack of financial resources, the inadequate distribution of educational facilities, the high ratio of teacher/student per class, the overburdened curriculums and traditional teaching methods, and finally, the inadequate supervision and ineffective school-community relationship.<sup>63</sup>

### **CBE in Columbia: The Escuela Nueva (EN):**

The community schools model has been popular in Latin America a long time before its introduction to Egypt. One of its most important and most imitated examples is the “Escuela Nueva (EN) of Colombia” which was often mentioned as a pioneering educational reform initiative and a best practice in rural school reform.<sup>64</sup> It mainly targeted rural areas where one or two teachers teach all grades in one classroom. It was widely implemented in 1975, and it aimed at improving the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of schools in Colombia. Its main features were: flexible grading and promotion; intensive teacher training; and parental and community involvement.

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<sup>61</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 5

<sup>62</sup> Destefano et al. *Reaching the Underserved*, 14

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 15

<sup>64</sup> McEwan, “*The Effectiveness of Multigrade Schools in Colombia*,” 465-483

EN promotes a type of classroom pedagogy that is child-focused where students learn at their own pace, schedules are flexible, and systems of grading and evaluation exists. It also focuses on promoting active, participatory, and cooperative learning among school students. In addition, it has a very strong civic component as it promotes “a model of student government” which targets developing civic values and peaceful social interaction. Moreover, it focuses on strengthening the relationship between schools and communities.<sup>65</sup>

Studies showed that EN schools had higher levels of participation in community activities and high levels of teacher satisfaction with the methodology, training courses, and self-instructional learning guides.<sup>66</sup> One of the most successful elements of the EN model is its community component where the school (students and teachers) develops a community map for the communities surrounding the school; this is achieved by collecting information about the socioeconomic status of the families of students “family information cards”, agricultural calendar to help teachers design the schooling schedule accordingly, and to introduce the school as an information center to the community.<sup>67</sup>

According to different studies, the Latin American model of CBE, which was also implemented in Guatemala and Chile, was successful due to a number of aspects such as the usage of newly developed instructional materials suitable for the multi grade setting. The development and distribution of educational material such as teacher guides and student textbooks that facilitated self-guided learning, and enabled students to learn at their own pace without continual teacher supervision via active learning and small group exercises. These exercises are often relevant to the rural and agricultural settings of the communities.<sup>68</sup>

Strengthening the role of communities was also a positive aspect in the Latin America model of CBE, where governments and NGOs involve students in the management and organization of the school, especially in Colombia and Guatemala.

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<sup>65</sup> Hincapié, *The Effectiveness of Multigrade Classrooms*, 6,7

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*, 147

<sup>68</sup> McEwan, “*The Effectiveness of Multi-grade Schools in Colombia*,” 465–483

Communities were also engaged through the development of local community agricultural calendars.

Finally, regular students' assessments take place throughout the year; not only at the end of school year. Hence, teachers can alert students earlier and assist them to improve and master skills. "Flexible promotion" is considered one of the main positive aspects of the model in Colombia and Guatemala.<sup>69</sup>

Generally speaking, there are two discourses related to multi-grade schools and community education. One considers it to be a positive and beneficial teaching methodology while the other considers CBE to be a subordinate to the normal single grade schooling -which is still preferred by parents and teachers- and used only due to the financial and administrative necessity.<sup>70</sup>

*Since CBE was introduced as a reform mechanism to contribute to solving the problems of the Egyptian Education system, the following Chapter will provide an overview of the Education system in Egypt, highlighting its current main problems.*

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ninnes, et al, In Pursuit of EFA: *Expanding and Enhancing Multi-grade Schooling in Bhutan*, 195,196

### Chapter III PRIMARY EDUCATION IN EGYPT

According to Fatma H. Al Sayed, the Egyptian education system lacks a clear philosophy and suffers from an ideological vacuum.<sup>71</sup> Education system in Egypt and many other Arab countries, suffer from “institutional, structural, relational, and political ills,” and is in deep need for reform. There are Egyptian scholars who believe that education can play a major role in transforming societies while others who believe that it is a governmental tool to shape and influence ideas and beliefs of students.<sup>72</sup>

Since Mohamed Ali till the present time, Egypt has adopted different visions and ideologies which were reflected in the education system. Even the community education model of 1992 was presented by Zaalouk as a socialization institution that would lead to a social movement; a claim which will be examined in the following chapters.

*This chapter will provide an overview about Modern Egyptian Education System. It will also address the effect of structural adjustment policies on the educational sector highlighting the main current problems of education in Egypt. Education problems will be addressed focusing on three components: access, quality, and regulations and systems. It is important to look into the problems of the education system that led to the adoption of the community education model as an alternative and as a reform initiative in 1992.*

#### **Overview about Modern education<sup>73</sup> in Egypt:**

Under the rule of Mohamed Ali, who is considered Egypt’s Modernizer (1805-1848), education was one of the means used by him and his descendants to build a new modern country. The education strategy of Mohamed Ali aimed at training technicians for state service linking education to military to produce technical and military personnel needed for the army and the industrial factories.<sup>74</sup> In 1836 a council of public instruction

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<sup>71</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 81

<sup>72</sup> Sika , *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 32

<sup>73</sup> Modern Education introduced by Mohamed Ali and his descendants was different from the religious based education that was wide spread until most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>74</sup> Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey*, 60-62

was established and the ministry of education was established in 1886 during the time of Khedive Ismail (1863-1879) who has followed the same track of his ancestor and focused on education as he considered education as the center of state policies.

The first education plan was introduced by Ali Mubarak and focused on increasing the enrollment rates of students.<sup>75</sup> The modern public education school models were first established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it was mainly for boys with the purpose of providing civil servants for the British colonial administration where most students were from less privileged classes. Rich families used to hire European tutors to teach their children at home especially girls.<sup>76</sup> The first girls' school was established in 1829 by the foreign church missionary society whereas the first government school for girls was established in 1873 during the time of Khedive Ismail.<sup>77</sup> Only in 1923 that education became compulsory by the 1923 constitution<sup>78</sup> and later in 1952 the government considered "Free Education for All citizens" as one of its main goals.<sup>79</sup> During the two world wars, the number of schools in Egypt increased from 142 schools in 1913 to 2003 by 1930.<sup>80</sup>

Generally speaking, colonial involvement in the development of education systems in the "third world" still creates controversial debates as many historians and educationalist attribute the current problems to the colonial powers who either neglected education on both qualitative and quantitative levels - the numbers of enrollment (case of Egypt) or dominated education with the colonial culture (case of Algeria).<sup>81</sup> Lord Cromer in Egypt mentioned that "the best education for the poor should be technical and industrial rather than literacy." He was worried that educated masses would refuse manual labor and create tensions.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 33

<sup>76</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 45.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Decree 124 stating that primary education is obligatory was considered meaningless, since the required budgets to its implementation was never allocated.

<sup>79</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 45.

<sup>80</sup> Zaalouk, *The pedagogy of Empowerment*, 33

<sup>81</sup> Watson, *Education in the Third World*, 181-189.

<sup>82</sup> Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey*, 79-81

Until early 1950s, there was no clear governmental regulation for national education services; education was provided partially by the state and partially by private sector, missionary charities and religious based institutions. There were two education systems; one is free and called elementary and the other with fees and called primary. Only graduates of the primary education system could join universities and higher education institutions,<sup>83</sup> thus, limiting the opportunities for poor to join higher education institutions.

The revolutionary declaration of “free education for all citizens” was indeed very progressive; education became very popular even among parents who did not see its value before.<sup>84</sup> Law 214 was issued in 1953 and all students at all levels were exempted from school fees and primary education was transformed to one single system.<sup>85</sup> Under this law, all educational institutions became unified under Ministry of Education (MOE), and the curriculum was standardized by 1953. In addition, socialism became the main philosophy within the education system,<sup>86</sup> and education system became a key instrument for the dissemination and promotion of the regime’s basic ideology. The key elements of Nasser’s education strategy were: “rationalization of educational provision and removal of fees, expansion of education for all levels, and inclusion of an Arab Nationalist Orientation.”<sup>87</sup>

Education soon became a mean for social and class transformation and for access to better governmental employment opportunities. On the other hand, schools became very crowded and the government became incapable of providing quality-based educational services with the big increase in the numbers of enrolled children.<sup>88</sup> Enrollment expanded from 1 million students in 1952 to 3 million students after 10 years.<sup>89</sup> Some would claim that one of the greatest successes of the education system

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<sup>83</sup>Tadros, "State Welfare in Egypt since Adjustment," 238

<sup>84</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 46

<sup>85</sup>Tadros, "State Welfare in Egypt since Adjustment," 239

<sup>86</sup>Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 37,38

<sup>87</sup>Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey*, 119

<sup>88</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 46.

<sup>89</sup>Tadros, "State Welfare in Egypt since Adjustment" 239.



during Nasser's era is in its political socialization and how it succeeded in creating a sense of national pride amongst youth.<sup>90</sup>

However, by the late 1960s, educational gains slowed down and expenditure on education decreased due to the increase in military expenses and the 1967 defeat. With the *infatih* policies of Sadat, the government started to move away from its social commitments as a result of the structural adjustment policies and the free market economy. The poor were no longer the target of the state policies which were not designed to improve their status.<sup>91</sup> The Egyptian ideology, reflected in the education system, began to change from Arab nationalism to Egyptian nationalism.<sup>92</sup>

In spite of the improvements in enrollment, by the end of 1970s, there were still a lot of children out of school; mainly girls in rural areas. Only 50% of girls at the age of schooling were enrolled and the illiteracy rate among females was around 85%.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, the open door policies of President Sadat and the migration of professionals especially teachers to the oil rich countries has led to the establishment of education systems in the Arab countries but at the expense of the Egyptian Education system which started to deteriorate.<sup>94</sup> In spite of the financial shortages and the large fiscal deficit of 1980 which caused the decrease of the education budget,<sup>95</sup> education law 139 of 1981 has enforced education to become compulsory for nine years (primary and preparatory) as a measure to increase children's enrollment. This legal measurement was not of great help due to many reasons such as: limited number of school facilities, conditions related to enrollment, mainly of children above the age of eight or with no birth certificate who cannot be enrolled in schools, children who fail to graduate from primary school by the age of 14 and were expelled.<sup>96</sup> According to Zalouk, the education system in the 1980s was suffering from a "serious brain drain," weak infrastructure and deteriorated school

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<sup>90</sup>Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey*, 119

<sup>91</sup>Tadros, "State Welfare in Egypt since Adjustment," 240

<sup>92</sup>Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 39

<sup>93</sup>Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 46,47

<sup>94</sup>Zaalouk. *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 33,34.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid, 34.

<sup>96</sup>Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 46,47

buildings, lack of and misallocation of financial resources in favor of salaries, and obvious bias towards secondary and high education.<sup>97</sup>

### **Structural Adjustment policies and education:**

According to Mariz Tadros, the Egyptian state since 1991 continued its control over certain welfare services such as education and health, in spite of this “hegemony” these services deteriorated and the role of the government, in providing these services for free, has been negatively affected and reduced. This has mainly affected the access of poor people to these social services.<sup>98</sup>

Egypt has started negotiations with IMF by the late 1970s; however, the implementation of the structural adjustment policies has been delayed due to the “bread riots” of 1977. Since then, Egypt has adopted a gradual mechanism to apply such policies. In 1991 a new agreement was signed with IMF, and Egypt started the economic reform and structural adjustment program ERSAP. Many critics believe that this agreement has heavily affected the government welfare commitment and responsibilities towards the poor. Tadros argues that SAP affected the poor negatively by affecting their primary and secondary incomes through taxation or social spending, and through the decrease of the general public expenditure on the goods and services consumed mainly by the poor. Even the introduction of cost recovery measures has led to deterioration of equity of access and efficiency and quality of services.<sup>99</sup>

In the education sector, the “Free Education for All” commitment was not openly overturned, but it eroded as an entitlement.<sup>100</sup> Sadat introduced privatization policies in the education system. Consequently, foreign and private schools were re-opened offering

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<sup>97</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 34

<sup>98</sup> Tadros, "*State Welfare in Egypt since Adjustment*", 237-254

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 239,240

private education to upper and upper middle classes while public schools were left for poor and lower classes.<sup>101</sup>

In compliance with WB and IMF, the education fees have increased four times since 1986, and according to Egypt Human Development report EHDR, private expenditure on education has highly increased between 1991- 1997 while the poor are the ones bearing most of this increase.<sup>102</sup>

Mubarak considered the increase in private education to be “part of the development process in Egypt” which was emphasized in decree 306 of 1993 where private schools were seen by the government as reducing the burden on governmental education spendings. Business men establishing private schools were given tax concessions; however, the total primary private enrollment rates were around 8-9%. It’s worth mentioning that these private schools remained under the control of MOE and the “Association of Educational Cooperation” which was established to encourage and support private education. Accordingly, private schools have to get MOE permission to open and their curriculums and examination policies should get approved as well.<sup>103</sup>

The “unregulated privatization” of education was clear with the increase of the “private tuition” phenomenon which has later become semi obligatory causing threats to students and abuse to parents. The decrease in the education budget and the low salaries of teachers encouraged the teachers to force students to private tutoring or they will be harassed and humiliated in school and will not pass the exams. As Tadros mentioned, private tutoring did not aim at improving kids’ performance, but, bluntly, it was to ensure they pass final examinations. Although private tutoring is not allowed, yet MOE was not serious in its supervision to enforce the ban on private tutoring as there was no real intention to fight this phenomenon.<sup>104</sup> Families stated that education expenses have become one of the greatest financial burdens. According to EHDR, almost half of Egypt’s poor children are taking private lessons.<sup>105</sup> It can be claimed that the percentage

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<sup>101</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 40

<sup>102</sup> Tadros, "State Welfare in Egypt since Adjustment," 241

<sup>103</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 44,45

<sup>104</sup> Tadros , "State Welfare in Egypt since Adjustment," 243

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

of private lessons today is even higher.<sup>106</sup> Other expenses including forced donations, extra curriculum books ...etc, have limited the access of the poor to quality education.

### **Education Reform Policies during the Mubarak era:**

The 1990s was the “Education Decade”, and with the increase of international concern of education, especially primary education, as part of the “Education for All” commitments, Egypt started new reform policies in the 1990s supported by the increase of education aid funds. In 1993 the center for curriculum and instructional materials development was established; this center worked with MOE to improve text books and teachers manuals. Parents’ association was introduced by decree 464 of 1998 (currently decree 289 of Board of Trustees), in addition to students unions which were introduced by decree 203 (currently decree 62). In 1992, community school initiative was introduced. According to Sika, this project has created unprecedented cooperation and partnership between the MOE, UNICEF, and local NGOs. Moreover, Mubarak stressed on the importance of decentralization and the importance of coordination with civil society and private sector. In 2007 a five-year education reform plan was introduced focusing on three main objectives: first to increase the quality of education, second to increase community participation, institutionalize decentralization and enhance the quality of educational systems, third to achieve the equal access to education for all children.<sup>107</sup>

### **Current Problems of the Education System:**

Egypt has committed to the provision of a free education for all children through a series of constitutional and legal reforms. According to the different Egyptian constitutions and to the Education Law n.39 of 1981, it is the responsibility of the State to provide education to all Egyptian children aged 6 years for nine academic years.<sup>108</sup> Schooling is a function of the state. It is often an obligatory process that is funded and

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<sup>106</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>107</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 47-53

<sup>108</sup> Education for All National Plan Egypt:

<http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Egypt/Egypt%20EFA%20Plan.pdf>

organized by the government through providing: teachers' salaries, training and certification, text books and curriculums' guidelines, examinations and assessments. Schooling was seen not only as a tool for educating students, but also as a tool for community and national development.<sup>109</sup>

According to Sika, there are many factors which define the educational crisis in Egypt; most importantly the lack of clear educational philosophy that defines the strategic objectives of the educational system in Egypt. Failure of the system is manifested through the high rate of dropouts and the critical problem of illiteracy.<sup>110</sup>

Other problems include lack of school buildings; the high number of students per classroom that has increased recently, the condensation of curriculums which has affected the relationship between teachers and students besides the number of children per classroom, and the style of teaching and assessments which encourages memorization and obedience rather than critical thinking and analysis.<sup>111</sup>

According to the previous overview, one can agree with Fatma H. Sayed that the Egyptian education system lacks clear vision. Education in Egypt was used by different governments as a tool to dominate people and promote certain ideas and ideologies. From a religious based education passing by Mohamed Ali's strategy of education for industrial and military purposes to Khedive Ismail trial of offering a modern western based version of education reaching colonialism and the neglect of education. The Nasser's education vision of expansion of education for all was inclined and biased towards a certain ideology that soon was changed with total contradicting messages during the *infatih* era of Sadat and the influence of structural adjustment policies. Finally, Mubarak's era and the reform efforts that are mainly top – down and was influenced by pressure from international community with no real participation of education experts and important education stakeholders.

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<sup>109</sup> Baker and Wiseman, *Education for All* ,46

<sup>110</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools* 33.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid 34,35

*This section will try to outline the main current problems of the education system. In this section Problems of the Education System will be divided on the basis of three main components: Problems related to access, problems related to quality, and problems related to systems and regulations.*

### **The Problem of Access:**

*According to MOE National Strategic Plan of 2014-2030, the problems of education on the “Access” level include: Lack of pre-schooling facilities and nurseries, inability to absorb children on the primary level, high dropout rates (For 2010/2011 the number of children dropouts from the primary level has reached 28,841 while the dropouts on the preparatory level has reached 130,564), failure of final assessments, cheating in primary level, number of students per class, and finally, the school shifts/intervals system.<sup>112</sup>*

There are a number of environmental factors that affect the right to learn and affect the access to quality learning. These factors include the school and classroom infrastructure including desks, blackboards, labs etc., water and sanitation systems, the distance between the school and the children’s houses, the safety and security procedures in the school, the number of students per class room, the number of qualified teachers and the student to teacher ratio...etc.<sup>113</sup>

Egypt has one of the largest educational systems in the world with more than 54000 schools,<sup>114</sup> around 1 million teachers and administrative positions, and nearly 28 million students. The majority, (92 %), of the Egyptian children go to public schools while 7.8% of the children go to private schools.<sup>115</sup> Based on the MOE (2014-2015) figures, the net enrollment in “Primary Education” has reached 91.1%, and the primary completion rate is 93.1%.<sup>116</sup> which means that Egypt has made significant progress

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<sup>112</sup> MOE National Strategic Plan 2014-2030.

<sup>113</sup> Power Within: empowering girls to learn & lead, Reference manual, CARE USA, 2010.

<sup>114</sup> Randa Halawa, MOE, Interview by author, December 10, 2015.

<sup>115</sup> Education Program Document, Care Egypt, 2012.

<sup>116</sup> <http://emis.gov.eg/Site%20Content/book/014015/pdf/ch5.pdf>

towards achieving the Education for All (EFA) <sup>117</sup> and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) <sup>118</sup>, particularly in increasing enrollment rates and access to basic education<sup>119</sup> and closing the gender gap between boys' and girls' enrollment rates.<sup>120</sup> According to statistics from MOE, the number of male students in public schools is 8920715 whereas the number of female students is 8530354.<sup>121</sup>

Increased enrollment rates, especially among the most underprivileged, has been linked to wide-range of school construction which has begun in the 1980s and continued into the current decade. However, many children are still out of school because access and enrollment in schools continued to be problematic for some communities for economic, social, and geographical reasons. Most of these children come from poor families and live in remote rural communities. Moreover, according to Langsten, the quality of education in Egypt remains low.<sup>122</sup> One can claim that the rise of school enrollment rates in Egypt has not been accompanied by improvements in learning outcomes, and was achieved at the expense of quality.<sup>123</sup>

Despite the near universal enrollment rate that has been achieved for several years now, a recent study revealed that around 26% and 23% of surveyed girls in frontier governorates and rural upper Egypt respectively have never attended schools as opposed to 10% and 7% of boys regarding the same locations.<sup>124</sup> Yet, increased enrollment has surpassed the rate of growth in number of schools which has resulted in overcrowdedness. An average class in primary schools in Egypt is around 43 students per class; however, some governorates see a much higher average such as Giza which has 52

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all>

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

<sup>119</sup> GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION. Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

<sup>120</sup> Langsten, "Community-based Education in Egypt", 2

<sup>121</sup> <http://emis.gov.eg/Site%20Content/matwaya/2015/matwya2015.html>

<sup>122</sup> Langsten, "Community-Based education in Egypt" is it Achieving its stated goals?, 2

<sup>123</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>124</sup> Panel Survey of Young People in Egypt, (2014) , 55

students per class.<sup>125</sup> It is also noteworthy that these numbers may not appropriately represent the great degree of variance within Egyptian public schools as many government schools are over 100 students per classroom. This presents a vast gap as the ratio between the number of students to each teacher currently stands at 25 students for each teacher.<sup>126</sup> This ratio shows a considerable interruption and may be as high as 37.3 students per teacher (in Giza) with higher rates in disadvantaged areas. The global average is 23 students per teacher, the League of Arab States members' average is 21 students per teacher, and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula (GCC + Levant) average is 14 students for each tutor.<sup>127</sup> Unfortunately, the increase in enrollment levels was not met with an increase in public spending on education, as it constituted 11.7% of public spending in 2013/2014 down from 14% in 2004/2005 or close to 20% throughout the 1990s.<sup>128</sup> The relative decrease, -when compared to other national budget components-, in public spending in education could be directly reflected in the conditions of school facilities. For instance, 14,000 schools (32% of total) are not equipped with computer labs.<sup>129</sup>

The 2014 Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE), conducted by the Population Council, revealed some of the major complaints of students in primary schools in Egypt. Some of these complaints included the following: 36% of students complain of inadequate desks and chairs, 27% complain of over-crowdedness, 23% complain of poor lighting, 31% of urban dwellers complained of the short school day caused by the many intervals, and an average of 39% of students in informal settlements complain of broken windows, poor ventilation, and inadequate school management.<sup>130</sup> The same survey found that 60% of students are frequently absent from school missing an average of 9 days per month. The reasons beyond this absence include illness (52%) or, simply students do not find the school useful (22%).<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> CAPMAS. Education Year Book (2015), Egypt Chart 11-5

<sup>126</sup> CAPMAS. Education Year Book (2015), Egypt. Chart 11-5

<sup>127</sup> World Bank, Pupil-teacher ratio in Primary Education, Headcount Basis, World Development Indicators. 2015

<sup>128</sup> CAPMAS. Education Year Book 2015. Figure 11-34

<sup>129</sup> Ministry of Education, Strategy Plan for Pre-University Education 2014-2030, 62

<sup>130</sup> Population Council, Panel Survey of Young People in Egypt 2014, 62

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 88



Thus, High dropout rate and access to safe quality education remains to be an integral challenge facing education in Egypt, particularly for girls.

### **The problem of Quality:**

Measuring quality education is difficult as it must only be measured through a multi-faceted lens to capture the many different pillars of quality, and only when all these pillars are present together can education be considered of “quality.” These, pillars may include access to appropriate content, equal educational opportunities, safe learning environment, teaching effectiveness, improved quality of text books, adequate school infrastructure conditions, and student’s inclusion among others.<sup>132</sup> It is only when we attempt to combine these elements together that we are able to spot the true weakness of Egypt’s educational system; Egypt rank reached 141 out of 144 in “quality of primary education” in the World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report (WEF) for 2014-2015.<sup>133</sup>

*MOE defines education problems on the “Quality” Level to be suffering from: weak reading and writing skills for grades 1-3, lack of critical vision to curriculums and its improvement, weakness and inactivation of extracurricular activities, wide spread of private tutoring, inability to attract children and prevent dropouts, lack of services provided to children, lack of accountability and transparency in the education system; inconsistency between learning outcomes and community needs, and finally inefficient exams and assessments systems.<sup>134</sup>*

### **Violence and Child Protection:**

The Population Council’s SYPE study revealed that 54% of students reported that they are being exposed to be beaten by teachers ‘often or always’ occurs within

<sup>132</sup> Definition of Quality, CARE International. Education Program Document.

<sup>133</sup> [www.weforum.org/gcr](http://www.weforum.org/gcr)

<sup>134</sup> MOE National Strategic Plan, (2014-2030)

school premises.<sup>135</sup> These phenomena, among others, lead to poor quality of education and low attendance rate among students – particularly girls. Unfortunately, there has not been a nation-wide study that examines violence levels in all governorates. However, a recent UNICEF study conducted in Cairo, Alexandria, and Assiut revealed that children who are exposed to physical violence in schools in the year prior to the survey reached 43%, 51%, and 48% respectively. Physical violence in this study was divided into four main types; the most common type used in schools was “being beaten with a stick, belt, wooden cane or whip” which was more commonly experienced at school than at home.<sup>136</sup>

In a study conducted by CARE Egypt in Minya and Beni Suief, 34.5% of students shared the opinion that their rights are not realized in schools. When asked in a focus group why they believe their rights are not responded, some responses included “no one cares,” “because teachers are irritable,” “no one told us about it,” “girls should not complain,” “we have to be beaten to get educated,” “teachers only think about money,” among many other responses. As for cases of abuse, only 3.8% of students had mentioned not experiencing any abuse at school, yet their definition of abuse included insult, humiliation and physical violence as well.<sup>137</sup> In regards to physical violence, 64.8% of students reported being subject to cases of violence recently. There were also some rare cases of reporting sexual abuse (around 1.7% of students). The main abusers were identified as teachers (65%) then students as (37.9%). Girls are subject to cases of violence in schools due to ineffective child protection policies and dormant or completely inactive “Child Protection Committees” (CPCs) in districts.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, the weak connection of these entities with schools, and the lack of student awareness of their existence have rendered them ineffective. And thus, the MOE has issued a ministerial decree, no. 179 of year 2015, to create a CPC on the levels of the school and the governorate to establish a strong connection with the district-level CPCs currently functioning. Hence, this new decree must be utilized in establishing CPCs on the level of

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<sup>135</sup> Transitions to Adulthood: National Survey of Egyptian Adolescents, Population Council, 2001

<sup>136</sup> UNICEF, Violence Against Children in Egypt, Quantitative Survey and Qualitative Study, January 2015, 8

<sup>137</sup> Baseline study of the “Empowerment of Egypt’s Children to take action in schools and communities” project implemented by CARE Egypt and Save the Children, in Minya and Benisuif in the time period between 2011 - 2014

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

the school and in making students aware of such an entity in order to increase perceptions of safety within schools.<sup>139</sup>

### Extracurricular Activities and Student Participation:

Inclusion of students and parents in school management has proven instrumental when seeking an engaging school environment. Such inclusion can be sought through SUs and BOTs, which exist as mandatory structures and are put in place by the MOE in every school by the authority of national decrees and legislations. However, these entities rarely play a strong role in schools despite serving as an opportunity for participation and for students' character building.

The SU is an existing mechanism that is recognized in Decree 62 issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE);<sup>140</sup> it has budget allocations in schools and on the governorate level. In spite of the clarity of the Decree, there is inadequate support from the MoE to enable key stakeholders to appreciate the benefits of SUs and a lack of guidance as to how to implement the Decree.<sup>141</sup> Accordingly, SUs in almost all Egyptian public schools are not fulfilling their potential as a vehicle for children to organize and voice their concerns. Many are inactive, receiving little resource from schools. Furthermore, while the SU has to be elected by the students, the Baseline Study, of a recent CARE-led project in Minya and Benisuif, revealed that almost 50% of SU members in the schools targets in that project were not selected by students, but by teachers or social workers.<sup>142</sup> In addition, this study reveals that around 65% of the students responded with "I don't know" when asked what the role of the SU is in school, and 25% of the students responded with "class management," yet none referred to

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<sup>139</sup> Rabab Hussein, interview by author. April 20, 2016.

<sup>140</sup> Ministerial Decree # 62 states the purposes and goals for student unions in terms such as democracy/student participation, human rights, student responsibility to participate with school administration, etc. It gives specifics of structure (leadership roles & subcommittees) and timing for student union elections at school, district, governorate and national levels.

<sup>141</sup> Baseline study of the "Empowerment of Egypt's Children to take action in schools and communities" project implemented 2011-2014, (2011).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

participation in decision making in schools.<sup>143</sup> When asked what activities are usually implemented by the SU, 75% of students responded with “I don’t know.”<sup>144</sup>

Another variable that contributes to an unattractive school environment for girls is the lack of extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs; unlike what is usually available for boys; this is because girls don’t feel comfortable playing in the same playground as boys and don’t feel comfortable with male P.E. teachers.<sup>145</sup> According to findings from previous CARE studies, there are no social or sport activities or organizations such as clubs or any kind of informal group setting available for girls except for religious activities in mosques and churches. Even in basic activities, there are degrees of gender discrimination for instance, a recent study done by CARE Egypt has shown that in some schools girls are deprived from saluting the country’s flag in the morning lineup as it is believed to be a boys’ activity. Moreover, female P.E. teachers are very rare and physical education is not recognized as important activity. P.E. classes are usually used by other teachers (science – math ...etc) to cover teaching gaps. Finally, it has been observed that faculty of physical education provides traditional teaching methods besides that teachers are not equipped with the needed knowledge to work in difficult environments such as Upper Egypt.<sup>146</sup>

### Reading and Writing Skills:

A quality based educational content should offer a skills based curriculum focusing on reading skills, critical thinking, negotiation skills, and citizenship awareness. It should be relevant to students’ lives and able to help students grow and develop their personal skills.

Egypt has included a number of reforms over the past decade related to redesigning the school curriculum so that it includes learning objectives that revolve

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Hatem Zayed, interview by author. April 26, 2016

<sup>146</sup> Base line studies and Final Reports: Power to Lead PTL, Innovation through Sports: Promoting Leaders and Empowering Youth ITSPLEY Projects, CARE Egypt, 2009-2012.

around competencies, skills that promote problem solving, and lifelong learning.<sup>147</sup> In addition, the use of IT is placed high on the agenda both in teacher training and in classrooms' basic tools. A unified curriculum in selected core subjects for both technical and general schools was implemented, in addition to new electives to promote flexibility in school curricula, and to foster student-centered learning.<sup>148</sup>

Despite these improvements in the education content and government support for improving the quality of education, low levels of literacy, especially in early grades in primary schools, remain an issue.

Improving reading and writing skills of students in primary schools is a pertinent step in assuring enhanced quality of education. The newly created Readability Units<sup>149</sup> were established on the governorate and district levels with the sole task of implementing alternative curricula that prevent and remedy problems with illiteracy among students in schools – as official MOE data reveal that over 30% of public primary school students did not know how to read and write based on an assessment conducted in 2009.<sup>150</sup> Such shocking results were confirmed by an assessment conducted by CARE Egypt that revealed that around 50% of the students in grades 4, 5, and 6 in 20 schools from Benisuif and Minya could not read or write. With regards to official MOE records of the readability results in these two governorates, percentages of students in grades 4, 5, and 6 reached 41% in Benisuif, and 52% in Minya.<sup>151</sup>

The poor reading outcomes stem from various factors which include teaching methodologies that lack systematic, routine instruction of letter sounds, and the promotion of rote learning of vocabulary words rather than focusing on teaching reading and writing skills. In addition, large numbers of children start school without being exposed to reading and throughout their early school years, they are not encouraged to read, as school libraries are rarely utilized, besides, extracurricular activities in schools

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<sup>147</sup> Education Program Document, CARE Egypt.

<sup>148</sup> Education Program Document, CARE Egypt.

<sup>149</sup> Readability unit was established on the central level, 2011

<sup>150</sup> "Ministry of Education" 30% of primary students cannot read or write," *Youm El Sabei*, 19th of January 2015, <http://goo.gl/qYgfQb> (Available in Arabic only)

<sup>151</sup> Results of diagnostic assessment executed by MOE and CARE within the Early Grade Reading project 2013-2015

are generally missing. In addition, parents are not actively involved in their children's education, mostly because they themselves are illiterate, and therefore in many cases don't realize that their children are facing problems in reading and writing. Moreover, there is a lack of transparency on the part of schools about learning outcomes due to the automatic transfer of students from one grade to another.<sup>152</sup> This shows that schools and communities are not working together to support quality education, the current methodology for the Board of Trustees (BOT) is limited and does not cater to people's perspectives, and the school's self-evaluation process is too technical, long and time consuming making it very difficult to encourage participation from parents.<sup>153</sup>

### **The problem of Systems and regulations:**

*MOE defines problems on the level of systems and regulations to be Inefficiency of decentralization, inability to utilize the human resources within MOE, inflexibility of the MOE structures, and lack of communication channels; the different education systems of public, private, and international schooling.*<sup>154</sup>

Laws and Ministerial Decrees related to the quality assurance in the educational process are numerous to the extent that those in charge of applying it are often confused. Some of the laws or Ministerial Decrees are stripped of their content and thus their application becomes hollow. The tangled and complex legal issues, that do not take into account the physical conditions in the schools on one side as well as the lack of or incompetent human resources, is a main problem of the education system in Egypt.<sup>155</sup>

On the Laws and policies level, there are several laws and Ministerial Decrees that could be considered progressive if only applied efficiently such as the law 82 of quality and accreditation in education. Although article 12 of this law requires all educational institutions to apply for the accreditation certificate within a certain time

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<sup>152</sup> Automatic transfer: where student are transferred from one grade to the other regardless of their test scores or attendance.

<sup>153</sup> Hatem Zayed, interview by author. April 26, 2016.

<sup>154</sup> MOE National Strategic Plan, 2014-2030

<sup>155</sup> Abdel El Fattah, *Policies and Regulations Hindering the Achievement of Quality Education*, 2015, 10.

frame, there is no activation for the sanctions related to failure or neglecting of application. According to the law, schools which passed the certification date should be subjected to a number of sanctions such as change of its administration team, or upholding students' registration ...etc.<sup>156</sup>

In addition, the decree #203 of 1990<sup>157</sup>, which calls for a network of student unions at school, district, governorate and national levels, are not applied efficiently, yet there are very few active student unions in schools. Also, the Child law No 12/1996 which was amended by law No.126/2008 to comply with the essential principles and rights articulated in the CRC included many changes such as raising the minimum age marriage for boys and girls to 18, criminalizing the wide spread phenomena of female genital mutilation, and creating child protection committees at the local level. Although these changes are very important and crucial, awareness about them is still considerably limited, and the mechanisms to monitor their implementation are relatively weak.<sup>158</sup>

Moreover, the Egyptian education system has been suffering from a very centralized structure for many decades, all operations including planning, budgeting, financing and resource allocation, organization, monitoring and evaluation, and finally the delivery of educational services are centralized within MOE. This has led to the misuse of available resources, inefficiency of services delivered to educational districts, which are being delivered at a high cost and low quality.<sup>159</sup>

In spite of the policies of decentralization in education, which were applied in a number of governorates where each governorate prepares its own budget and starts its negotiations with the ministries of finance and planning, there are still many obstacles that are hindering this process. Adding to that, public spending on education is still very low where salaries of teachers and administrators are the main burden.

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<sup>156</sup> Hanaa Kassem, Head of Readability unit at MOE, Regulations and Policies affecting Quality of Education, Seminar, MOE and CARE, December 8, 2015

<sup>157</sup> Decree 203 has been replaced in March 2013 by decree 62. The differences between the old decree and the amended one are very minor.

<sup>158</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>159</sup> Kamel, *Analysis of the Current Problems of the Education System*, 2011.

Problems of teachers' distribution where there is a severe shortage in some remote areas and intensification in other areas; there is 28% shortage in Arabic language teachers at the primary level. The huge administrative structure of MOE includes too many administrative positions that eat almost 90% of the education budget where promotion is by seniority and not quality and efficiency of employees.<sup>160</sup>

In addition, according to Khaled Abdel Fattah, policies for hiring teachers represent a key challenge to achieving quality education in light of increased shortage in teachers. In spite of the MOE declared aspiration for decentralization in education, its application in reality is still very limited. The school and its administration do not have the authority to hire the needed teaching staff, neither does the educational administration. The hiring of teaching staff is semi-centralized at the directorates of education under the supervision and administration of the organization and management division. The hiring in the educational directorate is not based on the need for teachers. Also, the head of the directorate does not have the power to reject a request to transfer a teacher. In addition, there is administrative corruption and interferences from mayors or members of parliament or local councils to pressure the head of the directorate to reverse a decision, "whether it was refusing a teacher's request or a decision to transfer a teacher to another school."<sup>161</sup>

There is also a severe shortage of employees in schools. Recently, as MOE has stopped hiring employees in schools due to lack of resources and left the matter of hiring employees and the management of their salaries to BOTs. Such procedure was not functional in most of schools as its success relied mostly on the availability of the required funding to guarantee the employees' salaries, and the capability of the BOTs to manage and mobilize financial resources, which varies from one area to another. Generally speaking, the Board of Trustees is not active in most schools and lacks the understanding of its role in school management. "Many schools, which are five stories high, have only one single employee for cleaning while other schools do not have any

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Abdel Fattah, *Policies and Regulations Hindering the Achievement of Quality Education*, 12.



cleaning employees. This reflects negatively on the cleanliness of the school and its facilities.”<sup>162</sup>

Thence, World Economic Forum ranking and the prevalence of the referred-to challenges, are illustrative of the fact that universal access and an increase in public spending alone may not be significantly correlated to improvement in quality education for all.

*In the context of the major problems and flaws of the education system during the 1980s and early 1990s, the idea of community education was introduced in 1992 as a reform mechanism especially in Upper Egypt. Next chapter is going to shed the light on the CBE model; its definition, objectives, and legal system.*

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 13,14

## **Chapter IV**

### **Community Education: Definition, Rationale, Different forms, and Legal Structures**

In Egypt, in spite of the high enrollment rates, access to ‘quality’ primary education is poor. During the 1990s, various governmental reforms programs were introduced, specifically to raise the quality of primary education and increase enrollment in schools. However, access to ‘quality’ primary education in Egypt continued to be a problem.<sup>163</sup> In 1993, the number of girls out of schools was around six hundred thousand, most of them in Upper Egypt.<sup>164</sup> Those children did not have access to education facilities, or joined schools for a short period of time and dropped out later.

CBE came up as a second chance that is less in cost and more practical to introduce children especially girls to schooling and education. It was supported by many donors in the context of the focus of the international community on the commitments of the EFA world conference of 1990. Mainly, UNICEF and USAID were the supporters of this model in Egypt. The model also received support from Suzane Mubarak, the first lady at that time. In 1993, ministerial decree 255 was issued to regulate the work in these schools.<sup>165</sup>

*This Chapter will define the CBE model with its different forms, and present the goals and rationale of CBE in the MOE national strategies. It will also outline the current legal structure governing the model.*

#### **Community Education in Egypt: Overview, Definition, and Rationale:**

In Egypt, community based Schools were introduced as an alternative to increase girls’ enrollment in basic education, especially in rural areas of Upper Egypt. According to Farrukh Iqbal and Nagwa Riad in their paper ‘Increasing Girls’ School Enrollment in the Arab Republic of Egypt’, the net enrollment rate was around 83% for girls and 89.5%

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<sup>163</sup> Blankenbeckler, *School Dropouts*, 2004

<sup>164</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 34

<sup>165</sup> Sebae, *Final Report "Education for Children in Most Need*, 2010

for boys in 1996- 1997. In 1999/2000 enrollment rates for both girls and boys have increased to reach about 89.2 % for girls and 92.5 % for boys, with an overall increase from 86.3 % to 91 % for all students.<sup>166</sup> However, in some rural areas girls' enrollment rates have reached only 63% to 70%,<sup>167</sup> according to Joseph Farrell, "Case Study: The Egyptian Community Schools Program." Parents in rural areas were unwilling to send their girls to schools for many reasons, some of which are: the distance the girls have to walk to schools and their safety, male classmates and non-local teachers, and also the long school day that would keep the girls from supporting the family and house chores. Thus, in some rural areas, girls' enrollment could be only around 10-15%.<sup>168</sup>

In 1992, UNICEF and MOE established a number of community schools to be a model that can be replicated later. The project was considered as a model that could work effectively with children of primary school age. Later on, MOE developed another program to establish the 'one- classroom schools'. They designed this program to be based on the community schools project approach. The UNICEF model also inspired other organizations, such as CARE, to start working on the issue of community education.<sup>169</sup>

According to MOE's National Strategic Plan for the pre-university education in Egypt 2014 – 2030 CBE aims at: "providing opportunities of high-quality education for those who have been deprived of education or dropped out of school, including the children, especially girls, in the age group (6-14), most particularly in disadvantaged areas in rural and urban regions, by means of one-class schools and community schools."<sup>170</sup> Community education targets those children using two main criteria:

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<sup>166</sup> Iqbal, Farrukh, and Nagwa Riad (May 2004), 16.

<sup>167</sup> <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-EgyptCaseStudy.pdf>

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-EgyptCaseStudy.pdf>

<sup>169</sup> Meeting EFA: Egypt Community Schools." <http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-EgyptCaseStudy.pdf>

<sup>170</sup> Ministry of Education (2014), The National Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education Reform in Egypt (2014-2030) Education: Egypt's National Project: Yes, We Can. Cairo: MOE.

children's age and children being out of school, (whether never enrolled, or having dropped out after enrollment).<sup>171</sup>

Thus, the main targets of community education are: children who have dropped out of primary education between the ages of 9 to 14; Also, Children who are between the ages of 6 to 14, and not enrolled in schools and live in locations deprived of educational services or locations with high class density in primary schools; and children living in difficult conditions, such as children subjected to child labor, and homeless and street children.<sup>172</sup>

According to Ray Langsten "Community-Based Education' (CBE) has been a small, but important, part of extending access to education to all Egyptian children." These schools started in the 1990s, generally used teachers, called facilitators "moyaserat", who are holding an intermediate certificate "diplom", and are usually less qualified than "regular teachers." They are then recruited by local communities and trained using 'active learning' and other methodologies specifically designed for the multi-grade classroom. Usually these schools have some levels of involvement of communities, in the form of "donated land and labor," where communities provide buildings or places for the school, and form –with support from NGOs- local committees to supervise and help in school management.<sup>173</sup> School furniture is supposed to facilitate 'cooperative learning.' Teaching is supposed to be child friendly and participatory. Schooling hours should be flexible to encourage girls' attendance. Curriculums should be relevant to the communities and children experiences.<sup>174</sup>

As mentioned on MOE's official website, Community education gives priority to girls over boys particularly in villages and communities that are characterized by high dropout rates amongst females, in order to close the gender enrollment gap between boys and girls.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Langsten, "Community –Based education in Egypt" is it Achieving its stated goals? 2,3

<sup>174</sup> Ibid,3.

<sup>175</sup> <http://portal.moe.gov.eg/AboutMinistry/Departments/cabe/dep-centers/dep6/Pages/dep6i.aspx>

The mission of CBE, according to MOE, is based on three components: develop the learners' language skills and acquire the basics of reading and writing; master basics of mathematics to enable learners to deal with the surrounding environment; assist learners to adapt socially to their surroundings and acquire social, scientific, behavioral, and vocational skills.<sup>176</sup>

The National Strategic plan of MOE 2016-2017 states clearly that CBE is considered a second chance that provides quality based education for children between the age 6 to 14 years old, and provide more flexible models of education that are appropriate to the different geographical and cultural differences.<sup>177</sup>

Most schools are located in Upper Egypt. According to the Human Development report of 2010, approximately 4 million out of the 5.4 million poorest Egyptians reside in Upper Egypt, mainly in the three governorates of Minya, Assiout, and Sohag. Such geographic disparity justifies the focus.<sup>178</sup> In 1995/1996 the number of community schools was 111 schools reaching a total of 2859 students; in 1997/1999 the number of schools reached 202 reaching a total of 4656 children.<sup>179</sup> Today there are around 5000 schools serving more than 100000 children.<sup>180</sup>

### **Different models of Community Based Education:**

The first form of Community based Education that emerged was the one classroom schools *Al Fasl El wahed*. Later other forms such as the Girls Friendly Schools, Multi Grade Schools, Community Schools, and Parallel schools appeared. Each form was adopted by a semi-governmental entity, or famous international NGO or a strong CSO such as NCCM, UNICEF, CARE, Misr El Khier and others. Some experts claim that the different forms guaranteed flexibility and ability to adapt to different

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment in Community Based Education*, 8

<sup>178</sup> Education Program document, CARE Egypt.

<sup>179</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*. 94,95.

<sup>180</sup> Magdy Abdel Ghany, interview by author, December 10, 2015.

situations, while others claim that it has led to confusion and encouraged deviation from the main objectives of CBE and in some cases it led to competition.

### The One Classroom Schools Model

In 1993, 3000 school were established through MOE on the basis of ministerial decree 255. The “National Department for one classroom schools,”<sup>181</sup> was also established and named after the model. The schools were built in rural areas targeting girls within the age group (8-14).<sup>182</sup> These schools aimed at increasing girls’ access and enrollment to primary education. The schools were under complete supervision of MoE which was responsible for providing equipment and all needed resources including hiring of facilitators. The schools accepted students free of charge and were flexible regarding enrolment as it allows the girls that were previously enrolled in regular schooling to join the school based on an assessment conducted by MOE.<sup>183</sup>

According to Menza, the system of teaching in these schools is based on a multi-level model where the students are divided into groups based on their educational level, grades from 1-3 in one cluster, grades 3 – 4 in another cluster, and finally grades 5 - 6 in a third cluster. In addition, specialized supervisors were trained and appointed to monitor the progress of the schools and teachers.<sup>184</sup> According to MOE, today there are 3,313 schools serving 63,919 students, 51,390 of them are girls.<sup>185</sup>

### The Girls’ friendly schools Model

The main supporter of the ‘Girl’s friendly Schools’ model has been the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood NCCM. They developed and supported this model in response to the United Nations’ girls’ education initiative which was launched in April 2000 aiming at reducing the gender gap in primary education enrollment rates.<sup>186</sup> Some of the schools were established on government owned land or community donated

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<sup>181</sup> It included local district units that were assigned to operate and support the new schools, the name was changed later to be “National Department for Community Education.”

<sup>182</sup> In 1998 the age was changed to be from 6-14.

<sup>183</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*, 159

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> <http://emis.gov.eg/Site%20Content/matwaya/2015/matwaya2015.pdf>

<sup>186</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*, 158

land. Children were exempted from school fees, and received daily meals, monthly goods (oil and rice), and stationery were used as incentives to encourage girls to attend. Also, new teaching methodologies such as active learning were used.<sup>187</sup>

According to Menza, this model aimed at the creation of a learning environment that is exciting and motivating to make schools more attractive and to stimulate the interest of both the children and their parents. ‘Girls counseling’ and ‘Peer to Peer’ approaches were used to address problems related to girls drop outs. This model was considered a ‘scaling up’ of the community schools previous models.<sup>188</sup> According to MoE, there is around 1036 Girls friendly school today, including 24,843 students, of whom 20,038 are girls.<sup>189</sup>

### **The UNICEF Community Schools:**

Supporting Community based Education is one of the main objectives of the UNICEF’s Education Program.<sup>190</sup> UNICEF was one of the very first organizations to adopt and promote Community Education in Egypt. It introduced this model as a pilot for implementing community schools on a larger scale. This model introduced a number of pillars that are essential to the success of the experiment, mainly community participation. Education committees including parents and community members are established to monitor and manage the schools. It advocated for a partnership between UNICEF, MOE, and the community.<sup>191</sup> The first phase was from 1992-1995 and the second extended from 1995-1999. Today there are around 250 schools including around 5,000 students. All the schools are currently under the supervision of MOE.<sup>192</sup> This initiative was studied and presented by Malaak Zalouk , and to date it represents one of

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<sup>187</sup> Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment in Community Based Education*, 13

<sup>188</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*, 158

<sup>189</sup> <http://emis.gov.eg/Site%20Content/matwaya/2015/matwaya2015.pdf>

<sup>190</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*, 158

<sup>191</sup> Sebae, *Education for Children in Most Need*, 2010

<sup>192</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*, 158

the most well researched CBE models in Egypt. Some of the most extensive published data available on community schools in Egypt are related to this model in particular.<sup>193</sup>

Currently UNICEF, like many other organizations, is no longer active in the process of management and operation. However, it is advocating for quality assurance on the policy level. “UNICEF supports the development and dissemination of national standards for quality community based education and the improvement of statistical information and analysis on out-of-school children.”<sup>194</sup>

#### Mutli-grade schools:

This model was first introduced by CARE International in Egypt in 2000-2008 during the implementation of the new schools project NSP,<sup>195</sup> where 189 multi-grade schools have been established in Fayoum, Benisuif, and Minya.<sup>196</sup> This model is a semi regular form of education based on partnership between MOE and community using active learning methodologies. CARE took into consideration the previous models of UNICEF and the one-classroom school. The difference was that it focused on a smaller number of students and thus better quality was expected. Schools were close to the communities providing higher rates of attendance. ‘Multi-grade’ schools were designed to offer accelerated education opportunities. It included dropouts and children who missed schooling targeting the most vulnerable girls. It is also considered a cost effective model and its construction cost was very low compared to other forms as it was located in the already existing buildings in the rural community. Although it was established as a temporary solution until NSP schools are completed, some of the schools continued to function.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> The NSP project was implemented during the period from 2000-2009, the funding amount was: 40,093,755 \$; funded by USAID and in partnership with MOE; Education development Center EDC; Salama Moussa; and EHAF consulting engineers.

<sup>196</sup> Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment in Community Based Education* ,15

<sup>197</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education* ,152



### Misr al-Khir Community Schools:

Misr al-Khir started its community education work in 2010 when they adopted 82 community schools established earlier by UNICEF.<sup>198</sup> The CBE model of Misr El Kheir is similar to the other models; however, to Menza, one of the important features of that model is the involvement and “continuous efforts” of Misr El Kheir to form and run the school. Such involvements include: mobilizing local communities to donate a piece of land; providing needed infrastructure and equipment; and hiring and training the facilitators.<sup>199</sup> Today, the organization has around 892 schools in different governorates, all under its supervision, and not yet delivered to MOE. According to the head of community education unit at Misr El Kheir, their model is successful for many reasons, mainly the fact that they insist on hiring facilitators with university degrees and not “diplom” like other models. They are also involved in employing the facilitators, paying their salaries, training them, equipping the schools and engaging the communities. They have a number of committees in each school, such as: cleaning committee; planning committee and health committee. Students are members of these committees and they assist in the school management. They also apply the ‘readability curriculum’ to ensure better reading and writing skills. Moreover, they also have higher ability to negotiate with MOE.<sup>200</sup>

### Parallel Schools:

This model has been mainly implemented by *Al Saaed* Association- Upper Egypt Association. In these schools, schooling is flexible and open for all children. It doesn’t require a birth certificate, school hours are determined by learners and it aims at providing the learners with life skills and vocational skills to increase their employability.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

<sup>199</sup> Menza, *Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education* ,160

<sup>200</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

<sup>201</sup> Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment in Community Based Education* , 15

### Children in Difficult Circumstances:

It is implemented in cooperation with UNESCO, WFP and NGOs working on the issue of street children and homeless children. It aims at providing these children with educational service to eliminate their illiteracy, and offer social and psychological support.<sup>202</sup>

### **Different Models: Advantages or Disadvantages:**

One can claim that there are no major differences between the different models of community education. They are all quite similar in terms of objectives, enrollment policies and the quality of educational services offered. The scattered models reflect lack of coordination between NGOs, and to some extent competition, where each organization has a signatory or a brand name model.

For instance, the incentives (oil and rice) and meals offered by the ‘Girls’ friendly schools’ encouraged girls to dropout from other models such as the one classroom model. Some parents even did not send their girls to government primary schools on purpose so they can send them later to the Girls Friendly schools in order to get the monthly goods.<sup>203</sup> Currently, WFP with EU are implementing a joint project related to nutrition and combatting girls’ dropouts in community based schools by providing monthly goods to families against regular attendance of their daughters.<sup>204</sup>

Most NGOs are no longer managing the schools. MOE is supervising almost all schools and having difficulties finding enough financial resources for training facilitators or supervisors and for school maintenance.<sup>205</sup> It could be said that the huge attention existed during the period from 1992 – 2008 for community education has faded to a great extent.<sup>206</sup> This was reflected on MOE too; in 2007 there were 40 supervisors and 67 employees within the community education unit. In 2015, there were only 11 employees,

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid. P.16

<sup>203</sup> Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment in Community Based Education* ,16

<sup>204</sup> Rabab Hussein, Interview by Author, April 20, 2016.

<sup>205</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>206</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

2 technical supervisors, and a very limited number of supervisors functioning within the different community education local districts.<sup>207</sup>

To summarize the previous points; in order to establish a ‘Community school’, there should be no primary schools in the area where the community school will be established. The distance between the target children’s residence and the closest primary school should not be less than two kilometers. Adequate lighting and proper aeration conditions should be considered in establishing classes. However, many organizations did not respect these conditions.<sup>208</sup>

### **What is the Legal Framework Governing community education?**

According to Magdy Abdel Ghany, Head of Community Education Unit at MOE central national level, there are many ministerial decrees governing the work of community education in Egypt and a number of periodical books and journals.<sup>209</sup> Abdel Ghany thinks that the decrees are not considered an obstacle in itself, but the problem is that they are scattered and confusing. He agrees with Adel Badr and other educational experts that there is a need to have one law for community education.<sup>210</sup>

Decree 255 of 17/10/1993 is the first and main decree related to community Education and the ‘One Classroom School’ model in particular. It consists of 16 articles and was the first decree to stipulate the regulations related to where to open CBE schools. Students’ age, description of schools, school hours, days off, financial incentives are considered in this degree. It also includes a sample study plan of the number of classes from grade 1 to grade 5.<sup>211</sup> On the basis of this decree, the community education unit was established on the central MOE standard, at that time it was called “the One Classroom School Unit – *Al Fasl El Wahed.*”

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<sup>207</sup> Magdy Abdel Ghany, interview by author, December 10, 2015.

<sup>208</sup> Fam and K. Kassab, *A Second Chance: Community Based Education in Upper Egypt*, 2015. 199, 200.

<sup>209</sup> Magdy Abdel Ghany, interview by author, December 10, 2015.

<sup>210</sup> CARE has led an initiative with MOE- community education Unit to produce a draft of the unified law; this draft has been submitted to MOE in early 2015.

<sup>211</sup> Decree 255 of 1993

Article 1 states that 3000 schools will be opened in areas that lack education facilities. Article 3 confirms that these schools are exclusively established for girls in the age group 8-14. Also, article 4 states that only female teachers are allowed to teach, preferably selected from the same community.<sup>212</sup> It is worth mentioning that 98% of community schools facilitators are women.<sup>213</sup> Article 7 determines that Fridays, market days, and feasts are days off from school. Article 10 states that the financial incentive for facilitators reaches 40 EGP per month. Article 11 considers that the certificate obtained from these schools is considered a final certificate of completion of this phase, and girls who wish to join the preparatory level will have to apply.<sup>214</sup>

According to Decree 255, for the establishment of a ‘Community school’; first, there should be no primary schools located in the same area where the community school will be established. Second, the distance between the target children’s residence and the closest primary school should be more than two kilometers. Third, adequate lighting and proper aeration conditions should be available in the established classes.<sup>215</sup>

There is a need to amend this decree, to be more accurate and specific about selecting the appropriate locations for building community school. It is a core element of the criteria for establishing the CBE schools, which in fact can lead to the success or failure of the efforts exerted to support community education. Another issue is the vague definition of the targeted children. There is also a need to raise the financial incentive and to encourage the automatic transfer of all girls to preparatory schools after graduating from community schools.<sup>216</sup>

According to Decree 98 of 3/5/ 1994 concerning the supervision and the follow up of MOE on the newly opened schools, it was decided that each MoE supervisor on Directorate level is in charge of supervising 10 community schools.

Decree 328 of 28/9/1996, stipulated that the educational content of community education should be similar to that of public schools, with the addition of vocational

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<sup>212</sup> Decree 255 of 1993

<sup>213</sup> Interview with MOE central level

<sup>214</sup> Decree 255 of 1993

<sup>215</sup> Fam and Kassab, *A Second Chance: Community Based Education in Upper Egypt*, 2015

<sup>216</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

training component. It also approved initiating “productive projects” that can increase the income of students. According to this decree, the “passing average” of community schools graduates who are enrolled in preparatory schools is 25 % less than other students. This decree also recommends the teaching of English language starting from grade four till grade six.

In Decree 62 of 1/3/1997, the Minister of education approved rising the age of enrollment for community education graduates in public schools to 18 years for the first year of preparatory schools.<sup>217</sup> It obliges preparatory schools to specify one classroom or more for graduates of community schools who wants to continue their education.

Decree 147 of 30/4/1997 focuses on enrollment policies, assessments and tests upon which children are accepted to join the One Classroom Schools. It states that the educational district *Idara Taalimia* is the entity in charge of executing such assessments. While Decree 146 outlines the need to hire teachers for social studies with high level certificates to teach grades from four to six years old.

Decree 30 of 2/10/2000 is one of the most important Decrees related to CBE, as it regulates the relationship between NGOs and MOE in relation to community education. According to this Decree, NGOs are allowed to establish one-classroom schools and community schools in remote areas that lack educational facilities to deliver educational services to the poor and address problems of drop-outs in primary education. The Ministerial Decree number 30 outlines the roles and responsibilities of both NGOs and MOE in details. NGOs are requested to provide and equip an appropriate space and agree to maintain this place by ensuring it is suitable and appropriate as a learning location. NGOs should apply to MOE “through Community Education Administrations at each Educational Directorate *Moudireya*, to obtain the required permissions to open community classes.”<sup>218</sup> According to this Decree, NGOs are required to establish ‘Educational Committees’ in the communities, in which the schools will be located. These committees will still be supervised by MOE. Membership of the committees will

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<sup>217</sup> Decree 420 of 2006 later raised the age again to be 20 for preparatory and 22 for secondary schools.

<sup>218</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

include community leaders, local MOE officials and parents. The committee plays a role in the selection of vocational projects, determining of schooling schedules, vacations, and accepting new students.<sup>219</sup> Also, based on the Decree, the committee with the support of NGOs will be ‘monitoring attendance records for teachers and students’ and developing appropriate solutions to address problems of repeated absence or absence for extended durations<sup>220</sup>. NGOs are also in charge of employees’ salaries, in accordance with their agreement with MOE, at the time the NGO were granted the license to establish community education classes.<sup>221</sup>

On the other hand MOE identifies the target groups of students based on the decrees and regulations of one-classroom schools. Appointing facilitators is done according to certain criteria related to qualification and place of residence and in some cases pays their salaries. MOE is responsible for providing trainings for the appointed teachers and supervisors, on using different educational materials and applying new educational methodologies. MOE provides CBE schools with schoolbooks, and determines the teaching and work systems of schools. MOE, provides supervision and technical guidance, conducts tests and assessments for different grades and ensures that students who pass the primary stage in these schools are enrolled in the official preparatory schools according to MOE regulations.<sup>222</sup>

One can claim that this decree is very progressive in giving NGOs an appropriate space to work in the communities. It encourages community engagement in educational processes, and above all it divides the responsibilities between NGOs and MoE as partners. On the other hand, in 2007, another decree related to the same issue has been passed, Decree 381 of 25/11/2007. It was mentioned that the reason behind the issuance of a new decree is the new models that were introduced mainly by UNICEF and CARE and needed to be regulated.<sup>223</sup> However, in spite of the detailed role of education

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<sup>219</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

<sup>223</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016

committees enforced by the decree, most communities today don't have a functioning community committee.<sup>224</sup>

On the basis of Decree 445 of 9/11/2006, all students from community education who wish to continue with preparatory and secondary schools are exempted from all school fees. This decree was supposed to encourage students to pursue higher education after graduating from community schools.<sup>225</sup>

The Periodic Book 'Elketab El Dawery'<sup>1</sup> of 2007, authorizes education directorates to accept children in community schools at the age of six.<sup>226</sup> It also permits the transfer of students from primary schools to community schools. Furthermore, the supervision and supervisors of community schools are not reporting or following the public primary education supervision unit. One could claim, that by implementing these two regulations in particular, the main objectives of the model that was introduced in 1993 started to change. As CBE was introduced as a temporarily mechanism for elder children in places with high ratios of dropouts and in places where there are no public primary schools.<sup>227</sup>

Decree 396 of 30/11/2008, changed the name of the 'One Classroom Unit'- after almost 15 years - to 'Community Education' unit, which is the name still used until today.

### **Reflection and Analysis:**

It is obvious that there are so many ministerial decrees, MoUs, and ministerial decisions related to community education. They are indefinite and confusing and sometimes contradicting. Even the progressive ones are not fully implemented. Many MOE officials, on the local level, are not fully aware of these regulations. That is why the application of the model differs from one place to the other according to the implementing entity. For instance, regarding the enrollment age of children, some CBE

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<sup>224</sup> Field work in Talt, and Hoore.

<sup>225</sup> Magdy Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment in Community Based Educatio*, 2014

<sup>226</sup> This particular procedure was implemented earlier on the basis of ministerial memorandum "mozakera" in October 1998.

<sup>227</sup> Mona Kotb, Interview by author. December 20, 2015.

decrees states that the enrollment age is 8 years old, while other decrees states that it is 6 years old. However, the MOE national strategies state that the targeted age for CBE is from 9-14.<sup>228</sup>

Regulations related to targeted areas, stated in CBE decrees, declaring that CBE schools and classrooms should be opened in remote areas and in areas that are deprived from educational facilities are often not respected. According to Langsten, different models of community schools are located in one village, and in areas very close to an existing primary government school.<sup>229</sup>

Moreover, there is weak technical guidance in education departments and directorates. Supervision is rare and sometimes no supervision at all is conducted in especially in remote areas. This is due to poor travel allowances and non-availability of an independent vehicle for follow up visits. Thus, Law 41 covering travel allowances needs to be amended; particularly the provisions on accommodation overnight and travel.<sup>230</sup>

Finally, there is a huge need to unify all these decrees in one law governing community education in Egypt, to avoid confusion and inefficiency of implementation, such request has been raised by many NGOs and education experts.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>229</sup> Langsten, *Community-Based education in Egypt* " is it achieving its stated goals? 8-10.

<sup>230</sup> Meeting with community education top management officials and CARE Education program, February 18, 2014.

<sup>231</sup> Recently, Mr. Magdy Abde El Ghany, Head of Community Education Unit at MoE Central Level, stated that there is will to unify the decrees and that they are discussing a draft of the unified law.



## Chapter V QUALITY OF COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION

### Assessing Multi Grade schools from Hoore village- El Minya and Talt village- Benisuif

This Chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a conceptual framework describing the quality of education. It highlights a number of different definitions and including the recent criteria and indicators produced by the National Authority to apply Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NAQAAE) on CBE schools in Egypt. It also introduces the main pillars of the CBE model, as defined by Malaak Zaalouk, at the early phase of the model. The second section presents the fieldwork implemented in two villages in Upper Egypt, Talt in El Fashn, Benisuif and Hoore in Malawy, Minya, to assess the current situation and quality of educational services provided by these CBE schools. Assessment will be done against the main pillars of the CBE model as defined by Zaalouk.

#### **Definitions of Quality of Education:**

In their article *the impact of educational quality on school exists in Egypt*, Cynthia B. Lloyd, Sahar El Tawila, Wesley Clark, and Barbara S. Mensch define quality of education as:

“Time available for learning during the school day material inputs such as books, desks, quality and quantity of teaching staff, science labs, availability of nurse/doctor; and attributes of the school and classroom environment, such as orderliness, the learning environment, teacher and student attitudes, school policies, teacher treatment of students, gender messages, and student behavior.”<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup>Lloyd, et al., “*The Impact of Educational Quality on School Exit in Egypt*”, 448

Improving quality standards of education is known to be contingent upon the presence of a number of different pillars.<sup>233</sup> According to the EU framework, there are 16 main indicators which are used to measure the quality of education. These indicators are: Mathematics, Reading, Science, Information and Communication technologies, Foreign Languages, Learning to learn, Civics, School drop outs rates, Completion of upper secondary education, Participation in higher education, Evaluation and steering of school education, Parental participation, Education and training of teachers, Participation in pre-primary education, Number of students per computer, and Educational expenditure per student.<sup>234</sup>

UNICEF, on the other hand, presents five main pillars to measure the quality of education. These are: Educational content, Educational environment, Educational processes, Educational outcomes, and Readiness to learn. These pillars were also adopted by CARE to be used as measurement of quality where each of the pillars includes a set of indicators and measurement criteria.

Improving quality standards in the formal education sector in Egypt was implemented as a result of the 'Improving Primary Education' project that was partially funded by World Bank and EU. In 2003, the 'National Criteria for Education in Egypt' was established. Then, in 2004 the concept of 'School Based Reforms' emerged. Finally, in 2006 The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education NAQAAE<sup>235</sup> was established by the law number 82 for the year 2006. Accordingly, a quality unit has been established in MOE central level and was shadowed in all educational districts and directorates.<sup>236</sup>

All MOE educational strategic plans, state that its main objective is improving educational quality. The 'School Based Reform' movement aimed at improving curriculums, teaching methodologies, assessments, teachers, IT, leadership and learners' development.<sup>237</sup> The current educational strategic plan 2014-2030 defined five main

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<sup>233</sup> CARE definition of quality, Education Program Document

<sup>234</sup> [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/lifelong\\_learning/c11063\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11063_en.htm)

<sup>235</sup> An independent quality and accreditation body that reports directly to the Cabinet.

<sup>236</sup> Abdel Fattah, . *Policies and Regulations Hindering the Achievement of Quality Education*,8

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

pillars for improving quality of education which are School infrastructure, School environment, Improvement of curriculum, Performance of teachers, supervisors, and administrators, Decrease in the percentages of drop outs, absentees, and failure.<sup>238</sup>

### **Community Education and NAQAAE:**

Recently, in January 2015, the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education has outlined the main criteria for assessing the quality of community schools in Egypt. One can claim that this step was taken to raise the quality standards of community schools education to meet those of public schools.

Raising quality standards is important for both the community schools and public mainstream schools. However, in the community education model quality is even more important as lack of “quality” if proven to be a general symptom can lead to canceling the model on the basis of its cost per student compared to public mainstream schools.<sup>239</sup>

The NAQAAE document set the main five criteria to assess the quality of community education, these are: Learning environment, Community participation, the learner, the teacher and vocational training. These criteria include a number of indicators and practices to measure the performance.<sup>240</sup>

First: Learning Environment: Under the “Learning Environment” criterion there are two indicators:

1. Schools should have a vision and mission reflecting their main objectives and it should be drafted in participation of relevant stakeholders.<sup>241</sup>
2. A supporting environment for the educational process should be available including: Safety and security; Health services to students; Preparation of school (space, light, ventilation); Measures taken to limit factors leading to

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 8,9.

<sup>239</sup> Menza, "Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education", 155

<sup>240</sup> Best Practices Manual, UNICEF and NAQAAE, 2015, 9-12.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

absence and dropouts; Predominance of positive social relations; The engagement of learners in classroom management; Availability of educational guidance services for learners; Following democratic measures in administrating learning environment and decision making process.<sup>242</sup>

Second: Community Participation: Under the “Community Participation” criterion, there are two indicators:

1- The school supports the surrounding community: school should provide educational awareness to the surrounding community; the school should use the available community resources to activate the educational process and provide products/services to the community (one classroom model).

2- Parents and community associations’ support community schools: parents should encourage school activities, in addition, parents and NGOs should provide services to school.<sup>243</sup>

Third: The Learner: Under the “Learner” criterion there are two indicators:

1- Learner achieves the community education targeted learning outcomes: learners should be excelling in Arabic, English, math, science, and in social studies.

2- Learner performs life skills: learners should practice healthy behavior, follow security and safety measures, practice social skills, master vocational training, and practice communication and information technology.

Fourth: The Teacher or Facilitator: Under the “Teacher” criterion there are five indicators:

1- Teacher’s plans for all her tasks: teachers should plan for lessons according to the targeted learning outcomes and consider active learning methodologies.

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

2- Teacher's efficient class management: by managing time according to lesson's objectives and by efficiently managing multi-grade classrooms.

3- Teacher's usage of active learning strategies: through being able to understand the experiences of learners and builds on new experiences, developing learners' knowledge and skills, using the available resources, equipment, and tools to activate the active learning strategies, designing valuable activities and consider individual differences between learners, linking the curriculum to everyday life experiences, and through using elements and resources from the surrounding environment.

4-Teacher's activation to the accelerated education strategy "*esra'a ta'aleemy*": this would be through raising awareness about "accelerated learning" among learners, providing mechanisms to assess learners' abilities, and applying quick learning mechanisms.

5- Teacher's effective application of evaluation tools: by using different assessment and evaluation tools, improving her teaching performance on the basis of assessment results, and providing remedial interventions on the basis of assessment results.

Fifth: Vocational Training: Under the "Vocational training" criterion there are two indicators:

1- Availability of experiences supporting the educational process: teachers attend training workshops, exchange experiences with one another, and become able to make use of training material to improve their performance.

2- Availability of quality assurance system: This is by using a self-evaluation study on the basis of quality standards and existence of an improvement plan on the basis of the self -evaluation results.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

## The Essential Pillars of CBE Model:

According to Malak Zalouk<sup>245</sup>, the success of the community education model depends on a number of essential pillars such as:

### 1. Community participation:

In the CBE model, community is supposed to play an active role in defining and finding solutions to its most compelling problems. In the 1992 CBE model introduced by UNICEF, the concept of the “education committee” was introduced to guarantee community ownership, engagement, and management of the schools. Each community forms a committee of local leaders and donors and representatives of different categories including women, men, and youth. The committee plays the role of the “board of trustees” of public schools managing daily decisions and connecting the community with the school.<sup>246</sup> The community offers a piece of land to build school premises. Education committees, Local school boards, are then formed at each school. School curriculum and activities reflect the community’s experiences and are part of the local culture. The school working hours and days off and teachers’ selection are determined by the community. CBE schools were used as “learning hubs”, as some courses and seminars were offered after school hours which include: parenting classes, preschool and daycare, non-formal adolescent education, environmental education, and hygiene, health, and nutrition classes. Community schools were completely free of charge; no uniforms required, no costs for private tutoring, and no “hidden costs.”<sup>247</sup> the same concept of engaging communities via committees was used during the Inception phase of the CARE NSP project, “Education groups” played a post role in encouraging parents to send their kids to the news schools; they collected birth certificates, and donated or rented the school premises.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Malak Zaalok was called the mother of community education in Egypt.

<sup>246</sup> Zaalok, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 36

<sup>247</sup> Meeting EFA. Egypt Community Schools", 2006

<sup>248</sup> Mona Kotb, interview by author, December 20, 2015.

## 2. Partnerships:

Establishing a partnership relation between MOE, NGOs, and the communities was extremely important to guarantee the success of the model. The agreement signed in 1992, between MOE and UNICEF, defined the roles between partners as follow: MOE pays salaries of the facilitators, provides school books, participates in the training, and offers a small meal for students whereas UNICEF, on the other hand, designs the model, designs and execute the trainings, provides: furniture, equipments, stationery, and learning materials. The communities supported by NGOs are responsible for providing the land, while NGOs are responsible for management and implementation.<sup>249</sup> Accordingly, Decree # 30 for 2000 was issued by MOE to regulate the work of NGOs in CBE. Thus, according to Sika, this project has created unprecedented cooperation and partnership between the MOE, UNICEF, and local NGOs.<sup>250</sup>

## 3. Formal recognition and transition to public schools:

Graduates of CBE schools are entitled to an official certificate of completion of the primary schooling phase allowing them to continue their preparatory education.<sup>251</sup> Transition of CBE graduates to public preparatory schools is based on Ministerial Decree No. 62 of 1997 and No. 445 of 1998. Decree 62 “increases the maximum admission age to the first grade in the preparatory level for female graduates of community schools to 20 years, and the age of their admission in secondary school to 22 years”; and commits “one classroom or more at a preparatory school within the proximity of the one-classroom schools” for graduates of community schools. Decree 445 in article 1 exempts CBE graduates from school fees.”<sup>252</sup> According to Adel Badr, transition conditions among CBE and primary public schools graduates are almost the same with the exception of fees exemption in community schools.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 35,36

<sup>250</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools* 45

<sup>251</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 40

<sup>252</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015).

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

#### 4. Flexible schooling hours:

As children in rural areas help their families in the field with the harvest and at home with house chores, creating a flexible educational system to accommodate these needs was important. CBE schools provided both early morning classes and evening classes to accommodate these needs. Moreover, schools are being closed during harvest seasons and market days.<sup>254</sup>

#### 5. Selection of facilitators and training:

Facilitators are selected carefully, from within the communities, and trained. Selection is based on experience, personality traits, and competencies to help creating innovative and child friendly environment. Trainings are tailored to suit the school and the community avoiding the 'one size fits all' strategy.<sup>255</sup> Almost all facilitators were women holding an intermediate 'diploma' certificate similar to secondary school certificate.<sup>256</sup>

#### 6. Adequate facilities and furniture:

The main criteria for selecting schools' sites and locations are: safety, ventilation, lighting, and adequate space for an average of 25-35 children. The size of population was set to be not less than 1500-2000 inhabitants, with more than 50 children out of school. The distance between the village and the nearest public school should not be less than two kilometers. Furniture should be simple, flexible and adaptable to allow children to move freely and engage in group work and activities.<sup>257</sup>

#### 7. Pedagogy and curriculums:

Community education should be very innovative and should depend on the creativity of the children and the facilitator. Learning materials should be child friendly, stimulating, and attractive.

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<sup>254</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 38

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, 40, 42

<sup>256</sup> Magdy Abdel Ghany, interview by author, December 10, 2015.

<sup>257</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 38, 40, 41



## 8. Supervision and management:

Supervision is important to guarantee the quality of learning. In addition to the formal MOE supervision, Zaalouk suggested an additional type of supervision to be implemented via a community based well selected and trained supervisors' who supervise both the field and the technical aspects. These teams are selected from university graduates who have some experience in teaching and educational management. On the other hand, NGOs in each governorate, assign project managers, assistant project managers and field supervisors to carry on the role of managing CBE schools.<sup>258</sup>

Based on the above mentioned points, it can be stated that the philosophy of the community education model is based on three main aspects: community mobilization and engagement, capacity building of different stakeholders mainly facilitators, and the partnerships between different stakeholders.

### **Assessment of the current situation:**<sup>259</sup>

The early years of implementation of the CBE model have witnessed many success stories. Thus, abiding to and respecting the above mentioned pillars of community education could have had a positive impact on the current status of education. However, the current situation is far from the model introduced by Zalouk.

The next section will assess the current situation of CBE on the basis of the main pillars mentioned earlier: community participation; partnerships; formal recognition; flexibility of schooling hours; selection of facilitators and training; facilities and furniture; pedagogy; and supervision and management. Another relevant point would be also to check the respect of the main features of the community education model stated by the MOE in its decrees related to the definition of target groups and the criteria for children enrollment and community schools establishment.

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<sup>258</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 41

<sup>259</sup> Researcher focused on visits to different schools in Benisuif and Minya. In Benisuif, researcher visited the village of Talt where 5 community schools were functioning. In Minya the researcher visited the village of Hoor where 3 community schools were visited. Visits to both villages included focus group meetings with: facilitators; girls; supervisors; and former education committees.

## **Are the current existing Community Schools abiding by Ministerial Decrees?**

Despite the issuance of Ministerial Decrees which organizes the establishment of community schools determining the enrollment criteria, the reality on the ground is different. There are numerous obstacles which undermine the appropriate implementation of these decrees in the context of both enrollment of children and criteria for establishment. According to recent field studies done by Mohamed Menza, Ray Langsten, Adel Badr, and Magdy Rizk, most of community schools in Minya and Benisuif are not fully abiding to both enrollment and establishment conditions as stipulated by the previously mentioned decrees:

### **A- Criteria for Enrollment in Community Schools:**

CBE schools were supposed to be established in areas with either high dropouts rates or no existing public education facilities. However, recent field studies have shown that many students between the ages of 6 and 9 years are enrolled in community schools despite the existence of primary schools in their communities, which is considered a clear violation of enrollment conditions determined by several ministerial decrees.<sup>260</sup> A study produced on enrollment policies, has shown that 46% of girls joining CBS are between the age (6-9) while 54% are between the age (9-14). Although these schools are supposed to target the elder girls, many of the girls enrolled (46 %) are very young as poor families choose to send their girls to community schools because they cost less.<sup>261</sup> On the other hand, there is a decrease in the number of male students registered in spite of Ministerial Decrees that allows the enrollment of up to 25% of male students in these schools,<sup>262</sup> which is related to the perception of these schools being only for girls. This phenomenon is linked to the incentives offered by some CBE models to children's families.

Facilitators from the Tenth of Ramadan School at Hoore El Minya indicated that the WFP project of distributing monthly package of rice and bottle of oil upon completion of 22 days attendance has contributed to a significant increase in the rates of registration in

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<sup>260</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015), Field visits to Minya and Benisuif.

<sup>261</sup> Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment in Community Based Education*, 23

<sup>262</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education*, (Cairo: CARE International, 2015).

CBE schools. Some parents even transferred their kids from the primary public schools to CBE schools in order to get the “Rice and Oil.”<sup>263</sup> According to Mona Kotb, CBE started to depart from its objectives and philosophy when it started to accept children at the age of 6 in spite of the existence of a public school in the village.<sup>264</sup>

### **B- Criteria of the Establishment of Community Schools:**

Generally speaking, one can claim that there is a lack of commitment to the policies and regulations set by the MOE regarding the criteria of establishment of community schools.<sup>265</sup> Different Ministerial Decrees such as Decree 255 stipulated certain specifications and conditions regarding schools location and facilities; however, many schools were established within the same area of primary schools, while some schools were established within the premises of primary schools under the justification of the high density and the large number of students per classroom in the existing primary schools.<sup>266</sup> The Hoore three multi-grade classes were located within the premises of the Tenth of Ramadan primary school in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor.<sup>267</sup> According to Ray Langsten, in the three villages of el Fant and Mayana in Benisuif and Beni Ebied in Minya, there were several models of community schools within the same village, in addition to the existence of a primary school nearby. This has created, in many cases, competition between different schools on registering students.<sup>268</sup>

Another issue – also linked to the adequate facilities and furniture pillar - was the establishment of community schools that are not appropriate for learning where schools are established with small classrooms, with bad lighting and no sufficient windows.<sup>269</sup> In Talt village, Benisuif where there are 5 community schools (1 classroom school, 2 multi-grade community schools, and 2 girls friendly), 200 girls are using only one bathroom. “*We need more bathrooms. 200 girls are using only one bathroom. There*

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<sup>263</sup> FGD with facilitators, Hoore village, El Minya governorate, April 10, 2016.

<sup>264</sup> Mona Kotb, interview by author, December 20, 2015.

<sup>265</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015).

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Field visit to Hoore, Minya, April 10, 2016.

<sup>268</sup> Ray Langsten, "The Experience of CARE's Multi-grade Schools in Three Upper-Egyptian Villages," in *A Second Chance: Community Based Education in Upper Egypt: Its Prospects and Challenges*, ed. Michael Fam and Khaled Kassab (Cairo: CARE Egypt, 2015), 59.

<sup>269</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education*, 2015

is another one, but it is out of service”, “we want to have one room per grade”. Another girl in grade 6 mentioned the fact that having all grades in one class room makes it difficult to concentrate as the younger kids make a lot of noise.<sup>270</sup> The multi grade class room was not supposed to accept girls at the age from 6-9, it was established for elder girls in the age group 9-11.<sup>271</sup> In Hoore village, Minya, facilitators mentioned community schools where they have rats and no cleaning support. Girls in the two focus group meeting mentioned that they clean the classrooms themselves.<sup>272</sup> Girls in Hoore complained about having their classroom in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor with no access to water facilities and bathrooms which are in bad shape and located on the ground floor. “Climbing five floors every day twice or three times is hard for me.”<sup>273</sup> Moreover, many community schools were established next to public markets and noisy shops, and in some cases, community schools were established directly on highways with no walls to protect the children.<sup>274</sup> “We need a wall to surround the school; any one passing in the street can see us.”<sup>275</sup>

All the above mentioned factors have led to creating an unattractive school environment. If the school environment was appropriate, children will be motivated to come to school and there will be no need for the WFP (oil and rice) package to encourage attendance.<sup>276</sup> Such conditions have contributed to an increase in the dropout phenomenon amongst children of these schools.

### **1- Community Participation:**

In her book “The Pedagogy of Empowerment: Community Schools as a social Movement in Egypt,” Malak Zalouk suggested that community education is going to lead to a social movement. Although the term “community” is highlighted and emphasized in the title and in the definition of the model, it is claimed that the weakest link in this methodology / approach is the “community” itself. Field visits to two villages in Minya

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<sup>270</sup> Girls FGD, Talt, Benisuif, December 20, 2015.

<sup>271</sup> Mona Kotb, interview by author, December 20, 2015.

<sup>272</sup> Field visits to Talt and Hoore villages in Minya and Benisuif.

<sup>273</sup> Marina, Girls FGDs in Hoore, Minya, April 10, 2016.

<sup>274</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education*, 2015.

<sup>275</sup> Mary, Girls FGDs in Talt, Benisuif.

<sup>276</sup> Interview with Nehad Magdy, Head of Community Education Unit, Misr El Kheir, November 11, 2016.

and Benisuif have revealed that the community committees which were formed earlier to follow up and manage the schools are no longer there. In Hoore, former members stated that since the schools are under the direct supervision of MOE, there is no need for the committees. Some members mentioned that the withdrawal of the leading NGO (CARE) contributed to the disappearance of the committee since no body was there to activate and motivate the members and financial reasons were also mentioned.<sup>277</sup>

Both Ray Langsten and Mohamed Menza found parents' participation to be weak in CBE schools as well as public schools though slightly lower in CBE. According to Menza, while the communities have contributed to MGSs during the inception phase; like providing the buildings in some cases, it appears that community participation remained confined after this phase.<sup>278</sup>

In the Misr El Keir model, local committees are active in many communities;<sup>279</sup> however, the real test is to keep these committees active after the withdrawal of the leading NGO and under the MOE direct supervision.

According to Randa Halawa , Head of Community Participation Unit in the MOE central level , the role of community is weak; she blames NGOs who did not do a good job in creating awareness within the communities about their role. “The idea was not clear to communities” and what was expected from them was not sustainable as it was mainly focusing on the donations of land to establish the schools. After the revolution of 2011, many communities took back the donated lands and dismantled the schools.<sup>280</sup> On the other hand, Adel Badr, thinks that the MOE was not keen on the continuity of the community's role in managing the schools. Although there are a number of issues which can be solved with community engagement such as finding cleaning support or marketing the schools' vocational component products, but the lack of awareness on the facilitators' level and the lack of motivation on the community level led to this situation.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> FGD with former “education committee” members, Hoore, El Minya, April 10, 2016

<sup>278</sup> Community Education: Challenges and Prospects, CARE Conference, August 31, 2015.

<sup>279</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

<sup>280</sup> Randa Halawa, interview by author, December 10, 2015.

<sup>281</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

## 2-Partnership between MOE and Civil society organizations:

Relationship between MOE and NGOs is regulated by the Decree Number # 30, issued in the year 2000, 15 years ago, and currently does not meet the needs of the two main parties. This requires the issuance of a new Ministerial Decree to address the real needs and challenges and facilitate the work on the ground. According to Adel Badr, Coordinator of Education for All Coalition, there is no real partnership, true understanding, or belief in the role of civil society in education. There are many obstacles and challenges placed by the MOE on NGOs working on CBE. Thus, he suggests that supervision and follow up on issues related to CBE should be within the decentralization approaches, where the Governor of each governorate should be in charge and not the centralized MOE.<sup>282</sup>

The new decree should acknowledge the role of NGOs in the selection and appointment of teachers in participating in the technical supervision and technical guidance in community education, in supporting maintenance, and in determining the weekly holidays for each of the community education models based on the nature and circumstances of each community.<sup>283</sup>

On the other hand, Randa Halawa, Head of Community Participation Unit in the MOE central level, criticizes the NGOs for failure of sustainability highlighting the fact that the budget of the MOE is limited and cannot sustain the schools. She also blames leading NGOs for failing to build the capacities of CDAs within the communities and for not creating enough awareness on the media level. She points out that in the last 6-8 years the concern for community education has faded, and she encourages NGOs to work on CBE focusing on maintenance and training of facilitators.<sup>284</sup>

NGOs can help the MOE improve community schools, they can work on compiling databases of dropouts numbers; create community maps that determine the

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<sup>282</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>283</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

<sup>284</sup> Randa Halawa, interview by author, December 10, 2015

educational needs in rural and poor areas; and mobilizing human and financial resources from local communities to contribute to the improvement of community education.<sup>285</sup>

### **3-Formal recognition and transition to public schools:**

Focus group meetings with girls from Talt and from Hoore have showed that most girls wish to continue their education to preparatory schools. According to Mona Kotb, most girls join the preparatory school, but unfortunately, they drop out later; this clarifies why dropouts' rates are high within preparatory schools.<sup>286</sup>

However, there are a number of obstacles facing students in their transition from Community Schools to public preparatory Schools, some of which include: lack of preparatory schools in the villages where students live, or schools are far from homes or located in another village. Another obstacle is related to the different teaching methodologies used in community schools compared to the ones used in public schools. Also the big age gap between graduates of community education and their colleagues in the same level of preparatory public schools creates embarrassment for the CBE girls. In addition to the spread of the negative tradition of early marriage amongst girls in rural areas especially in Upper Egypt.<sup>287</sup>

Soaad Osman, the MOE registration section community education unit, points out that it is very difficult, sometimes, to get the accurate percentage of girls who complete each level. The registered girls are different from the ones attending classes, and again different from the ones graduating, “there is a major problem of accuracy in numbers, and results.”<sup>288</sup>

Some NGOs, such as Misr El kheir, are introducing the idea of establishing preparatory schools which are exclusively for graduates of community schools. They have already three preparatory schools since 2009; these schools are completely adopted financially and technically through Misr El Kheir.<sup>289</sup> Some experts are against such

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<sup>285</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

<sup>286</sup> Mona Kotb., interview by author, December 20, 2015.

<sup>287</sup> Policy Breifs, Evelyn Botros, interview by author, April 4, 2016.

<sup>288</sup> Soad Osman, interview by author, December 10, 2015.

<sup>289</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

procedure as it will deviate from the philosophy of the model aiming at linking the CBE graduates to the public schooling main stream systems. This will alienate the girls and will not be a sustainable solution in the future.<sup>290</sup>

#### **4-Flexibility of schooling hours:**

Although the model was designed to adapt and adjust to the needs of girls in rural areas, the MOE and its directorates have determined a fixed schooling hours' system. In both villages, facilitators determine the schooling hours and girls are not consulted; sometimes schooling hours would change according to certain correspondence or agreements between the MOE and other NGOs such as the case of Misr Elkier, which has flexibility in negotiating schooling hours with the MOE.<sup>291</sup>

In Benisuif, the school day starts at 8:30 or 9:00 and ends at 2:00 while in Minya, it starts at 7:30 and ends at 12:00. The weekend in Benisuif's schools is Fridays and Saturdays whereas in Hoore, Minya it is Thursdays and Fridays. Girls in Talt, Benisuif mentioned that when they start school a bit late, they have a chance to help in the house chores, thus, their families do not make a fuss about them going to school. They also mentioned that the "Market day" is on Thursdays, which is a school day; they stated that they often don't come to school on the Market day!<sup>292</sup> Moreover, Community Schools were supposed to be open all year long to offer acceleration of education for girls; however, since most girls enter at the age of 6, there is no need for acceleration and the Hoore schools are an example of schools that are closed for the 4 months summer vacation in violation of the MOE decrees and regulations.<sup>293</sup> Despite the educational district mentioning that they have received a memorandum of the necessity of providing a plan for summer activities for the upcoming summer holiday of 2016,<sup>294</sup> it can be seen that there are no consistency in schooling hours or vacations system in community schools and in spite of these differences, the changes are not done in consultation with girls or communities.

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<sup>290</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>291</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016..

<sup>292</sup> Focus group meeting, Benisuif, 21 January 2016.

<sup>293</sup> Field visits to Minya and Benisuif. January and April 2016.

<sup>294</sup> Interview by author, MOE supervisors on District (*Idara*) level, Hoore, April 10, 2016.



The failure to respect the needs of the girls has led to absenteeism which has affected the girls' learning performance and has mainly increased the rates of dropouts. The inflexibility of the schooling hours is a big deviation of the philosophy of the model that was designed to be adaptable to the needs of the communities especially girls.

### **5-Selection of Facilitators and Training:**

Facilitators play a major role in the success of the model; teachers, in general, are very powerful and have great influence on children; a teacher once said, as a teacher *“it is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather, as a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous...”*<sup>295</sup>

As mentioned earlier, facilitators were selected from the same communities; they are mostly holders of an intermediate secondary decree called “diploma.” Although the main stakeholders at the time of the introduction of the model -MOE – UNICEF-INGOs/NGOs - were in agreement of this procedure, no one can deny that these facilitators are not qualified to teach Arabic, math, science, and sometimes English to children from grade 1 to grade 6.<sup>296</sup> However, in the beginning, when UNICEF, NCCM, CARE and other leading organization were in charge, intensive training for facilitators and intensive supervision helped to maintain the situation. After the turning over of the schools to the MOE, trainings became rare and not with the same quality.<sup>297</sup> Currently, Misr El Khier selects facilitators with university degrees only to guarantee their ability to teach the MOE curriculums in different subjects.<sup>298</sup>

On the other hand, Facilitators in CBE teach almost all subjects, do all administration work regarding attendance and registration, follow-up and solve problems playing the role of the social worker, even sometimes playing the role of the cleaners. They are carrying a huge burden.<sup>299</sup> They are taking low honorariums, and are not treated as “teachers” according to decree 155 of teachers' cadre as they don't hold a university

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<sup>295</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development*, 101

<sup>296</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

<sup>297</sup> Focus group meetings with facilitators in Minya and Benisuif, January 21 and April 10, 2016

<sup>298</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

<sup>299</sup> Soad Osman, interview by author, December 10, 2015.

degree. Most facilitators are dissatisfied with the MOE's lack of support in training and financial resources.<sup>300</sup>

Facilitators reported that most equipment and appliances used for vocational training such as refrigerators, sewing machines, mixers, etc...are either not available or out of order; they reported the insufficiency of funds allocated to maintain the equipment. In addition, it is very difficult to sell the products of the "vocation training component" as the products are of bad quality and high price since the MOE regulations require a profit of 20% on all products produced from projects that are part of the vocational training.<sup>301</sup> Girls from Hoore, and Talt reported not having an English teacher. A girl from Hoore when asked about what you wish to change in the school she mentioned that she would like to have one teacher per subject; a request that was also mentioned in other focus group meeting with girls.<sup>302</sup> The challenges facing facilitators were also mentioned by Menza in a study for two different villages el Fant in Benisuif, and Beni Ebied in Minya which confirms the need to address such important issue.<sup>303</sup>

## **6-Pedagogy and Curriculum:**

In the startup of the model, curriculums for community education schools were designed to be child friendly and to encourage participation. It was mainly supposed to be appropriate to the communities and relevant to the daily lives of girls; however, the MOE unified the curriculums to be similar to those of public primary schools. This has turned to be a challenge for the facilitators who are holders of an intermediate certificate. Most of them have difficulties to teach Math and English especially to higher grades 4, 5 and 6.<sup>304</sup>

Currently, Community schools are suffering from the same problem of weak reading and writing skills that is widespread in public schools. According to Ray Langsten, 67% to 70% which presents two thirds of a girls sample in grades 3 and 4 from three villages in Minya and Benisuif were not able to read a simple passage in Arabic and

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<sup>300</sup> FGDs facilitators, Minya & Benisuif.

<sup>301</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

<sup>302</sup> Field visits to Talt, and Hoore January 21 and April 10, 2016

<sup>303</sup> Menza, "Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education", 167

<sup>304</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016

answer few simple questions. Elder girls in grade 5 and 6 scored a bit better as only 53% scored zero.<sup>305</sup> Facilitator in focus group meetings reported that they have a percentage of girls who are in grades 5 and 6 and cannot read or write; they blamed the condensed curriculums and the lack of training.<sup>306</sup>

In both villages, facilitators reported the lack of school books, “there are no books”; all have reported the delay in receiving the ministry text books which, sometimes, are not even there after the end of the school year.<sup>307</sup> Such problem was confirmed by Nehad Magdy, Amal Sayed from Misr Elkeir; however, the availability of financial resources enabled Misr El khier to distribute extra curriculum books such as “*Al Adwa.*” According to Nehad Magdy, the MOE did not approve in the beginning but had to accept later due to pressure from Misr El khier.<sup>308</sup>

According to Menza, girls in Al fant, Benisuif have reported taking private tutoring with teachers from public schools; something that pinpoints the weak quality of teaching in community schools and the fact that the schools which were introduced as free of charge to support the poor are turning to be a financial burden on families.<sup>309</sup>

## 7- Supervision and management

During focus group discussions conducted with facilitators in Hoore, they mentioned that supervision by MOE is limited only to checking preparation and documents and does not offer the needed support.<sup>310</sup> The MOE officials mentioned that there are no enough financial and transportation allowances to enable them do such follow ups. A supervisor for social studies in Benisuif reported being in charge of 31 schools. Consequently, under the supervision and management of the MOE, the schools have deteriorated.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Langsten, *Community –Based education in Egypt” is it Achieving its stated goals?*, 13

<sup>306</sup> Facilitators focus group meeting in Minya and Benisuif. January 21 and April 10, 2016

<sup>307</sup> Facilitators FGDs in Hoore April 10, 2016

<sup>308</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

<sup>309</sup> Menza, “*Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*”, 162

<sup>310</sup> Facilitators FGM in Hoore April 10, 2016..

<sup>311</sup> Interview with supervisor for social studies at Hoore, April, 10, 2016

## Reflections and Analysis:

The above mentioned section was based on the field visits done by researcher to Hoore - Minya and Talt - Benisuif CBE schools, and on the field work done by Ray Langsten and Mohamed Menza in Beni ebied in Minya and El fant in Benisuif. The above assessment demonstrates to what extent has the model introduced in the 1990s with a certain philosophy and objectives deviated from the mere objectives that it was created to meet.

The lack of a clear map, identifying the locations of geographical areas and communities that are most in need for educational facilities and /or with high percentage of dropouts, remains the major and most important obstacle and challenge that is hindering the establishment of community schools in the right locations.<sup>312</sup>

The unattractive school environment that resulted from establishing the schools in inappropriate locations, and lack of sports, arts, and extracurricular activities has led to increase in the dropouts rates. Children are less likely to continue as the education experience offered to them was of poor quality. Also, if they failed exams or failed to master reading and writing, their parents do not send them back to school.<sup>313</sup>

There is also a question related to empowerment, and whether the CBE model is empowering girls or making them more vulnerable. A facilitator from Hoore in Minya mentioned that a girl was forced to come to school, although she had a broken leg, as her parents were keen to meet the WFP criteria of 22 days of attendance per month to get the rice and oil. Only when the facilitator promised not to mark the girl as absent, that her parents allowed her to stay at home to rest.<sup>314</sup>

Sustainability and weak role of community are also two clear problems in the CBE model. Comparing the current status of schools to the situation during the early phases of implementation proves failure of sustainability and lack of real mobilization of

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<sup>312</sup> Adel Badr, *Policy Papers in Support of Community Education* (Cairo: CARE International, 2015)

<sup>313</sup> Andrea B. Ruch (2012), P.28

<sup>314</sup> FGD with facilitators, Hoore, Minya, April 10, 2016.

communities. Such problems are the responsibility of both implementing NGOs and MoE.

Recently, UNICEF, NAQAAE, and the MOE developed the CBE quality assurance criteria to address the issue of deterioration of quality of education of the community-based education schools. The five main criteria developed include thirteen indicators and forty six practices. Nowadays, large scale training is taking place to train 600 of the MOE and CBE supervisors and facilitators from different governorates on the basis of the above mentioned criteria with its indicators and practices. Those trained facilitators and supervisors will cascade the trainings to other facilitators aiming at covering all CBE facilitators nationwide. To be eligible for accreditation, each school should score at least 65% in each of the 46 practices.<sup>315</sup>

According to Nehad Magdy, the NAQAAE manual of practices and its quality assurance indicators are not going to offer the needed help, mostly they will help accredit the already good few schools. Most schools are far beyond these criteria and it will take a lot of time and money to improve the quality of education offered in order to meet the new criterion. Amal Sayed also thinks that these criteria are very much similar to those of public education and are not suitable for responding to the community education real needs.<sup>316</sup>

Setting criteria for quality accreditation of CBE schools is a vital and progressive step towards development of the model. However, beyond the training of 600 facilitators and supervisors, the next step is not clear. Especially with the limited budget of the MOE, and the insufficient funding for the equipments needed for the IT and for the vocational components. Furthermore, it has been 10 years over the enforcement of the 82 accreditation law of public schools and only very limited number of schools received accreditation. Accordingly, there is no guarantee that such mechanism will lead to the required improvements needed to raise the quality of education offered in community schools.

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<sup>315</sup> Menza, “*Quality and Cost Benefit of Community Based Education*”, 155, 156

<sup>316</sup> Nehad Magdy and Amal Sayed, interview by author, April 11, 2016.

## Chapter VI

### International Aid and Education

“The Egyptian state, driven by the need to reform and the desire to belong to an influential and resourceful international community used strategic bargaining and instrumental adaptation in buying into internationally promoted education reform objectives and means.”<sup>317</sup>

International aid and international donors played an important role in designing and implementing the Community Education model in Egypt. This chapter will address the issue of International aid and education focusing on how educational reforms are internalized and communicated to local actors.

After the Cold War and the economic and political changes that took place worldwide, development assistance and aid gained more significance as an important tool to influence international relations.<sup>318</sup> There was a need to revise the “ideological references” and norms of developing countries to ensure they are in line with the norms and values of the Cold War winner countries. Thus, education was used as one of the main tools for such task, as it is considered an “agent and subject of international socialization.”<sup>319</sup>

The World Bank<sup>320</sup> defined education as “ a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social wellbeing, and laying the basis for sustained economic growth ... and building democratic societies as well as competitive economics.”<sup>321</sup> Thus, improving the quality of education was considered the main priority for most of the developmental agencies since the 1990’s.

The multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, and the United Nations Offices (UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNDP) are considered the main agencies providing

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<sup>317</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 147

<sup>318</sup> Ibid, 2

<sup>319</sup> Ibid

<sup>320</sup> Largest donor for educational assistance during the 1990s

<sup>321</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 2

international aid to help developing education. Also, national government aid agencies such as United States Agency for International Development USAID, the British Department of International Development DFID, the Swedish International Development Agency SIDA, and the Canadian International Development Agency CIDA<sup>322</sup> also provided educational funds.<sup>323</sup> USAID has been a world leading donor in providing assistance to help developing the educational sector over the past three decades.<sup>324</sup> Moreover, international non-governmental organizations, INGOs, such as Save the Children, Oxfam, Care, International Red Cross and Red Crescent, were also highly involved in the education sector reforms and influenced both donor and recipient countries.<sup>325</sup> All these international organizations, which can also be referred to as ‘international community,’ have acted as ‘think tanks’ to help governments shape their political, economic and social reform policies. They have proven to be the most influential in the promotion of the universal norms of the ‘new world order.’<sup>326</sup>

### **Why Education Assistance:**

The 1990s was the education decade; education development and empowerment of individuals were highlighted as important issues by donor institutions. The world conference EFA and its declaration<sup>327</sup> became the “handbook of basic education policy making worldwide during the 1990s.”<sup>328</sup> EFA delivered many global promises related to education. The most important commitment made by EFA was the expansion of basic education to all children, youth, and adults to achieve the slogan “Education for All” (EFA). By the late 1990s and the Dakar world education forum, a new international consensus has emerged with unprecedented agreement among the international community and the OECD governments, on the importance of basic education. This

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<sup>322</sup> Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

<sup>323</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development*, 246

<sup>324</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, Preface.

<sup>325</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development*, 246

<sup>326</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 12

<sup>327</sup> The world conference on Education for All (EFA), Jomtien, Thailand in 1990.

<sup>328</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 15

consent created a flow of funds based on newly set approaches and partnerships in dealing with education aid.<sup>329</sup>

### **Has Aid truly helped?**

The international aid and financial assistance, received for more than 60 years, did not address global poverty and inequality in poor countries.<sup>330</sup> Many writers, critics, and development practitioners were skeptic about aid in general, and aid set for education in particular. Peter Bauer in his book: “*Dissent on Development*” argued that aid created dependency, increased corruption, distorted governments’ priorities and influenced the markets.<sup>331</sup>

Furthermore, others like Dichter stated, in his book “*Despite Good Intentions: Why Development Assistance*”, that aid has turned into “a business of its own.” and as a business, aid has become more concerned with its own survival rather than its achievements and success in addressing problems. He also believed that the successes reached so far such as, for example, the improvements in literacy levels, or the increases of children enrollment rates in schools, or the eradication of certain diseases, were the exception of the rule and not the norm.

Moreover, Dembisa Moyo, in her book “*Dead Aid*” indicated that aid creates a culture of ‘aid dependency’ and ‘aid addiction,’ which encourages laziness and carelessness of policy makers in addressing their own problems and finding local solutions.<sup>332</sup> Development practitioners also wrote about their disappointing experiences in development assistance mentioning that “even with brilliant designs, projects fail to anticipate all the hurdles that may derail them and few end up meeting the full expectations of their designers”<sup>333</sup>.

Criticism was also directed to the tendency of donors to dictate terms and conditions for granting aid to developing countries, thus, receiving aid was tied to

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<sup>329</sup> Baker and Wiseman, *Education for All: Global Promises*,7

<sup>330</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development (2014)*, p.245

<sup>331</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>333</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice (2012)*, 2.



political and economic interests of donors and their countries. For example lots of education funds were directed to post conflict countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. For instance, China is considered one of the main donors to East Africa considering its economic and investments interests.<sup>334</sup>

On the other hand, Klees explained that all these spent funds are “not near enough” and that “in 2008 the total amount of Aid to Africa was 35 billion US\$ which is less than the bailout of the US car industry.” He argues that with the neo-liberal cuts of public expenditure and the negative impact of these policies on the education sector, more money for education is definitely needed.<sup>335</sup>

Looking at Education aid, one would claim that funders did not always focus on the most important problems. It took assistance agencies too long to recognize the importance of quality after they spent too much time and money focusing on enrollment only. They also failed to define quality and its complexities including: classroom environment; teachers’ characteristics; teaching methods; curriculum and materials, etc. They focused on limited aspects related to the problem of education quality such as teachers training. Some major aspects were not addressed such as assessment methods, supervision, and developing of instructional materials.<sup>336</sup>

The international pressure performed by donors on governments to undertake and implement specific educational reforms has led, in many cases, to selecting the wrong priorities, which in turn resulted in making irrational choices. Only policies or projects that are most likely to draw the attention of donors were prioritized.<sup>337</sup> As Mohamed A. Naseem and Adeela Arshad – Ayaz stated in their article: “*The Market, the Nation and the School: EFA in Times of Globalization and Nationalism,*” despite EFA efforts to achieve educational empowerment and to draw global attention to reforms needed for

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<sup>334</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development* (2014), 250.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid*, 249.

<sup>336</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 27,28

<sup>337</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 20

education, the complicated relation between demands of global capital and labor market place and nationalist agendas of the developing countries created limited impact.<sup>338</sup>

However, and in spite of the previous aid critique, since 2000, receiving aid for education reforms has helped in realizing some of “the education for all” initiative goals concerning basic education. This was mainly due to the increase of education funds between 2002 -2010.<sup>339</sup> Education economists such as Mona El Baradeai believe that donor’s money could be a chance for improving education if it is managed efficiently by considering the real educational needs.<sup>340</sup>

#### International aid for Education in Egypt:

Egypt has been one of the main developing countries receiving international aid, especially during the two decades that followed the signing of the Camp David agreement.<sup>341</sup> Accordingly, Egypt was influenced by the main trends and strategies enforced by international donors. Donors such as World Bank, USAID, EU, and others directed some of their funds to the educational sector especially primary education in Egypt.<sup>342</sup> Furthermore, education, especially for girls, was seen as the fundamental element to achieving human development.<sup>343</sup>

#### **USAID early interventions: to what extent was it successful?**

##### Primary education and girls’ enrollment:

USAID started funding educational projects in Egypt by the late 1970s. During this time, the education sector was suffering from major problems mainly; the overcrowded classrooms, the insufficient number of schools and educational facilities in rural areas, the deterioration of the infra-structure, and the prevalence of private tuition associated with the declination in the quality of school education. Furthermore, costly uniforms, private tuition, and educational supplies defied the slogan of receiving “free

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<sup>338</sup> Baker and Wiseman, *Education for All: Global Promises*, 73

<sup>339</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development*, 250

<sup>340</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 75

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, 2

<sup>343</sup> Ibid

education” that was introduced during the Nasser era.<sup>344</sup> The large disparities in access to education, the inadequate physical structure in both quality and quantity, the poor teacher’s training, the lack of instructional materials and equipment, the lack of planning and set priorities; the overly centralized decision making and the weakness of financial management were outlined by the USAID assessment, that took place in 1979, as the main challenges faced.<sup>345</sup>

The basic education development project BEDP (1980-1990) was one of the main early interventions of USAID in Egypt. It focused on four main activities to address the problems of the education sector in Egypt, these are: building primary schools and classrooms to increase children enrollment, offering practical courses for primary students and providing equipment, reforming policies to increase the number of rural teachers and building an information system for educational management. 190 million dollars were spent on building 1300 schools in rural areas, where girls’ enrollment was low or no schools existed. MOE and USAID agreed that the schools were to be turned over to MOE after project completion and that MOE will be responsible for maintenance.

Around 1900 schools were built and delivered to MOE. As a result of the project, girls’ enrollment increased from 36% to 42%. Moreover, there was a huge demand on increasing the number of school teachers, especially female teachers. The USAID had to convince MOE to allow less qualified students from rural areas into the teacher trainings institutes to receive the needed training and become primary schools teachers. This procedure of hiring less academically qualified teachers has led to the declination of the quality of educational services in the schools. Furthermore, years after construction many schools’ infra-structure deteriorated and facilities were in a very bad shape as MOE failed to keep their promises regarding maintenance.<sup>346</sup>

Failing to see the full picture or addressing the issue through a holistic approach is sometimes a common mistake that ministries, INGOs, and local organizations commit despite of their initial good intentions.

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<sup>344</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 48

<sup>345</sup> Ibid, 55

<sup>346</sup> Rugh, *International Development in Practice*, 60

## Community Education: A Reform Policy Issue

Community Education was introduced as a reform mechanism. Since its adoption in 1992, many NGOs started to work on the community education sector supported by funds from USAID and other international donors. International donors and NGOs were the main stakeholders responsible for adopting, designing, implementing, and replicating the ‘Community Schools Model’ in Egypt. To understand how this model was implemented in Egypt, it is important to assess how policy reforms, on the domestic level, are communicated.

Governments (ministries of education or related bodies), International Aid Agencies, and local Civil Society Organizations are the main actors responsible for educational reform initiatives in developing countries. Initiatives are conducted on the basis of cooperation and partnership between these three administrations that might have different positions.<sup>347</sup>

One might claim that Education reform policies in Egypt are best understood using the “rationalist approach.” Domestic administrations may adopt reforms that are sponsored by external donors’ institutions in order to achieve political and economic benefits and not because they believe in the importance or relevance of these reforms. Another approach, the constructive approach, analyzes how different local actors and international community interact to put reforms into action. This leads to either the ‘internalization’ of these reforms, or addressing these reforms only through ceremonial official level with no internalization.<sup>348</sup>

### Ministry of Education and INGOs: Education as National Security issue

In 1991, education in Egypt became associated with the national security strategy. Former president Mubarak considered Education to be the main pillar for achieving national security and the “way to world competition in interior and exterior markets.”<sup>349</sup> Most Egyptian officials, including those of MoE, also agree that education is considered

<sup>347</sup> Baker and Wiseman, *Education for All: Global Promises*, 46

<sup>348</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 4

<sup>349</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 41

a national security issue and that western interference and donations are part of a conspiracy aiming to destroy the national culture and the Egyptian identity. Since identity and self-knowledge are formed during early childhood, basic education years are the most critical period in shaping young generations' minds, according to conspiracy theorists.<sup>350</sup>

However, many developing countries, under the pressure of donor agencies, were obliged to turn donors' requirements into superficial plans and strategies.<sup>351</sup> According to Fatma Sayed, in her book "*Transforming Education in Egypt*," the Egyptian government has adopted a number of concepts related to neo-liberalism, through international development agencies, in defining the development of basic education. Concepts from the 'Human Capital Theory' were integrated into MOE's official statements and policies.<sup>352</sup> Thus, MOE was in a dilemma caused by its socialist roots and its neoliberal direction.<sup>353</sup> For instance, one of the main aims of development assistance agencies especially the World Bank was to aim at softening the tension arising from the elimination of subsidies and privatization and its negative impact on the poor. This objective was welcomed by the Egyptian government who wanted to continue "the free education for all" policies, but could not afford the budget requirements to maintain quality standards required. The fact the 95% of the allocated education budget is spent on salaries for the MOE over staffed structure, obliged MOE to depend on development assistance funds for teachers training and improvement of educational facilities.<sup>354</sup>

According to Adel Badr and other NGOs leader, all education projects led by INGOs and NGOs are to be approved first by the "Community Participation National Unit," at MOE. The approvals include a security check by the "National Security Unit" of MOE, which might take a long period, reaching a year in some cases. Recently, even

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<sup>350</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 39

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, 22

<sup>352</sup> Ibid, 44,80,81

<sup>353</sup> Ibid, 75

<sup>354</sup> Ibid

certain activities such as studies, and final evaluations of projects could need a security approval.<sup>355</sup>

Finally, believing that all educational reform suggestions are part of a plot or a conspiracy has created a huge risk that could hinder achieving real educational reforms. Furthermore, adopting new strategies without studying and discussing them thoroughly is also not contributing to the development of the education sector.

### **Educational Reforms and its Communication on the Local Level:**

During the 1990s, the ‘Neo-liberalism’ and the ‘Neo-conservatism’ were the main streams of thought influencing the educational policies and practices.<sup>356</sup> Neo-conservatism is mainly concerned with the role played by the State in reinforcing culture and religion. They are concerned by the state control over the education curriculums as they believe education is “a key element to reinforcing a sense of identity, whether national, ethnic, cultural, religious or all four.”<sup>357</sup> On the other hand, neo-liberals believe that public schooling is waste of public resources calling either for privatization of education or optimization of public investments in education. They argued that public education systems have failed to provide quality education based on planning of man power and thus led to high rates of unemployment among educated youth.<sup>358</sup>

Both streams of thought were represented in Egypt. As a result, MoE customized their educational policies to represent both lines of thought and attain a moderate position.<sup>359</sup> One of the main problems related to educational reforms, is that reform plans are usually not discussed with intellectuals or educational experts beforehand. Intellectuals and legislators are only used to legitimate established policies and plans. Even on the MOE administrative internal level, ministers do not take technical proposals

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<sup>355</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>356</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 75-78

<sup>357</sup> Ibid, 58

<sup>358</sup> Ibid, 54

<sup>359</sup> Ibid, 62

and suggestions from the MOE technical staff into account especially if those recommendations are not coinciding with their own agenda.<sup>360</sup>

According to Fatma H. Al Sayed, educational reforms in Egypt were not internalized into the operating infrastructure and policies. On the basis of the ‘Argumentative Persuasive’ model, presented by Jeffrey Checkel, reforms were introduced in a heavy ideological context. The centralized and bureaucratic structure of MOE was contradicting the values promoted by the reforms. Furthermore, the persuasion process took place in a politicized environment on both the local and the international level.<sup>361</sup>

On the other hand, other experts like Yuto Kitamura worked on analyzing the educational initiatives and reforms, particularly those of the EFA initiative, using the philosophical idealism and realism perspectives in education. For instance, in the context of the EFA global promises, the international community has mobilized resources and has established a global framework to promote basic education for all in developing countries. However, this framework was mainly based on the strategies and ideas of the international community and in reality there was a tension between these global idealistic promises and the real national challenges facing developing countries. Thus, developing countries were struggling to adopt the initiative in their local contexts. According to Yuto Kitamura, the key factor was how to create ‘ownership of developing countries’ and ‘broadly based partnerships’, where the international community acts as a mediator between the governments and civil society.<sup>362</sup>

International development agencies highlighted the importance of community participation for achieving development in the education sector through emphasizing ownership of reforms and democratization of development. To them, NGOs play a role in empowering local communities through the transfer of functions and authority. Fatma H. Sayed, asserted that “considering local communities as irrational actors...incapable of making intelligent choices limits the possibility of finding solutions and condemns any

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid, 78-81

<sup>361</sup> Ibid, 81

<sup>362</sup> Baker and Wiseman, *Education for All: Global Promises*, 60,61

development program to failure.<sup>363</sup> Successful community participation needs communities' voluntary involvement in identifying problems; offering solutions; planning implementation and active participation in the implementation and monitoring phase.

### **Why reforms did not work in Egypt:**

Sika believes that “ All reform measures in the curricula and in the structure of school systems is following under the façade of the regimes measures of liberalization, rather than a true democratization.”<sup>364</sup> Despite of the superficial efforts done by the government to please donors and international community who keep pressuring for more freedom to civil society, the MOE is still a very centralized entity that has the upper hand over civil society. The MOE praises civil society in ceremonies and at the same time reinforces legal limitations on the formation and operation procedures. Financial restrictions also gave MOE the freedom to maintain regulatory control.<sup>365</sup>

Civil society depends mainly on receiving funds from international community which, in turn, affected the sustainability of educational programs. For instance, the deterioration that occurred in community schools, after the suspension of direct funding from donors, provides clear example of lack of sustainability. On the other hand, the role of civil society in creating real change and exercising pressure on government reform policies was limited by the government and the MOE's funding restrictions and conditioned projects approvals.<sup>366</sup> According to Fatma H, Sayed, states enforcing authoritarian rule suffer from weak civil society and “fails to perform the function of societal interest mediation.”<sup>367</sup> This is very apparent in the Egyptian case.

Internalized and sustained reforms are established through active participation of local actors and policy beneficiaries. In the case of community education people were mobilized to implement an externally designed project, using a top down approach. The

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<sup>363</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 123,129

<sup>364</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 60

<sup>365</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 142

<sup>366</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>367</sup> Sayed, *Transforming Education in Egypt*, 141



lack of administrative and technical capacity of the MOE institutions together with its centralized structure contributed to the failure of internalizing the reform policies. A community education model that is targeting high engagement of communities introducing new norms and values of participation and empowering of communities was “inconsistent with the functions, structures and culture of Egyptian educational institutions.”<sup>368</sup> Finally, it is very important to invest tremendous efforts to communicate change to different stakeholders.

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid, 150

## **Chapter VII: CONCLUSION**

According to Ray Langsten “there is still a need for more community schools in remote areas and areas with no educational facilities in Egypt. There are still some girls who have never been to school, and many others who have left school without completing primary education.”<sup>369</sup>

However, the quality of education offered to those children in community schools is the issue. Despite the current general deterioration in the quality of education in Egypt, still Egypt is a society in which education matters. There is still a high demand for receiving a better formal education, for all groups, in the Egyptian society.<sup>370</sup>

The CBE model introduced in the early 1990s was very promising. It has achieved satisfying results by increasing enrollment and completion rates and creating a better learning experience in its early phases. Zaalouk reported that in 2002, 2393 community school graduates enrolled in preparatory schools and 241 registered in secondary schools. Data gathered from the UNICEF’s community school experience on the quality of learning achieved shows that 90% of the students were able to pass official MOE examinations in third and fifth grade. The data collected to assess the experience documented in the book “the pedagogy of empowerment”, from 1997 through 2001, shows that third and fifth graders of community school students in Assuit, Sohag, and Qena performed better than their peers in public school. Community school third grade students’ success rate reached an average of 99 % in 2001, compared to 87 % success rate in public schools in the same districts.<sup>371</sup>

However, these achievements did not last for long and the high expectations regarding empowerment and creation of social change were not met. Social transformation happens when a new social consciousness is developed to raise awareness

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<sup>369</sup> Ray Langsten, "The Experience of CARE's Multi-grade Schools in Three Upper-Egyptian Villages," in *A Second Chance: Community Based Education in Upper Egypt: Its Prospects and Challenges*, ed. Michael Fam and Khaled Kassab (Cairo: CARE Egypt, 2015), 59.

<sup>370</sup> Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey*, 140,141

<sup>371</sup> Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 104-110

about social issues.<sup>372</sup> But the education offered by CBE schools did not raise awareness about “social issues.” In his study, Langsten stated that only one third of the sample of girls interviewed from three villages in Upper Egypt during 2011 and early 2012, knew the name of the Governorate and the district they live in. In addition, one third of the sample did not hear about the revolution of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011.<sup>373</sup> Moreover, a technical supervisor from Minya was obviously gender blind when he considered the fact that girls are the ones cleaning their classrooms to be accepted as “cleaning is normal task for girls.”<sup>374</sup>

The linkage between the school and community, where schools cannot be isolated from the social and economic context, and educators are agents of change, did not materialize. The current CBE schools are socially and politically isolated from their communities.

The assumption that social interactions between teachers, students and community members create “positive social capital” that could be reflected in the quality of education offered and could create continuous interest of the community to supervise and manage the schools did not happen in the case of Egypt.

Despite the fact that the CBE model included the term “community” in its title to emphasize the essential role of communities in managing and supervising the schools, recent studies have revealed that “community engagement” is the model’s weakest pillar. The “education committees” that have been dismantled after the withdrawal of INGOs are an evidence of a failure in community mobilization. Studies have proved that agents of social change cannot be created; they are to be found and supported. What was done through the different phases on CBE implementation was the creation of unreal social change agents who were not able to perform away from direct guidance of donors and NGOs.

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<sup>372</sup>Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 102

<sup>373</sup>Langsten, “*Community-based Education in Egypt*”, 24

<sup>374</sup>Field visit to Hore, Minya, April 20, 2016.

Not abiding by the different MOE decrees related to enrollment ages, has deepened the discrimination against poor girls and impeded them from joining public primary schools in their village. Girls are joining the less privileged community school that is free of charge and offers a bag of rice and a bottle of oil each month instead of the public mainstream school that even if not perfect still offers a better schooling experience. One would claim that if community schools continued to accept children at the age of six, these schools will be similar to what was criticized earlier by left education theorists; where schools are considered as “sorting and tracking institutes,” where children of poor classes are taught and treated differently from other children of the same age.<sup>375</sup>

Lack of MOE supervision and training of facilitators has led to the deterioration of quality of the education offered. The unattractive schooling environment has led to high levels of drop outs amongst students of community schools.

The Egypt CBE model failed to offer the model introduced by Paulo Freire in his book “The Pedagogy of Freedom” where education should respect “what students know” and “create a link between the curriculums, teaching material and the knowledge accumulated by the experience of living in certain areas or places” for instance, it should discuss issues such as “the implications, political and ideological of the neglect of the poor areas of the city by the constituted authorities,”<sup>376</sup> or “the question of poverty and the risks to health.” According to Freire, schools, as spaces that include both teachers and students, cannot be isolated from the social, economic, and political problems of the communities and should build on the students’ life experiences.<sup>377</sup>

Accordingly, the top down approach adopted by the government in managing the model will not lead to empowerment of marginalized groups because governments cannot create social movements. Social movements are a result of true interactions between community members, where they define their problems and search for practical

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<sup>375</sup>Hudson, "Education for Change" , 2

<sup>376</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, 16,17

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

solutions. Community committees created as per projects' design and donors' requests will not be sustainable.

On the other hand, teachers or facilitators, who are the main pillars of the model and were supposed to be the “agents of change,” did not receive appropriate training to be able to create an empowering learning experience for students.

As suggested by Paulo Ferrier, teachers' preparation should not be focusing on technical training only; it should also include “ethical formation,”<sup>378</sup> as teachers are considered the “agents of knowledge production.” He stressed on the difference between “transferring knowledge” and “producing knowledge”<sup>379</sup> highlighting the need for an educator with a “democratic vision” who can teach students methods of “correct thinking” and can help them see and understand more about the world around them.<sup>380</sup>

On the other hand, it can be claimed that community of education in Egypt is an example of failed international aid and financial assistance to education. When we analyze the reasons why CBE did not reach its goals, one would find the reasons very much related to the already existing literature and critiques related to aid and international financial assistance. According to Clive Harber, greater partnership and more coordination towards mutual accountability and results management of development projects is needed, as the top –down donor controlled aid relation does not lead to sustainable results.<sup>381</sup>

Moreover, the rigid and centralized structure of the MOE, and the methods through which reforms are communicated locally contributed to creation of confusion and distorted implementation of the CBE model. The fact that the minister does not have to consult with education experts or civil society organizations when issuing a new decree or changing a policy created lack of unified vision or clear strategy for education. Whenever the Minister changes, the policies would change, accordingly.<sup>382</sup> Since 2011, there were around five different education Ministers in less than five years. This frequent

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<sup>378</sup> Ibid,4

<sup>379</sup> Ibid,29

<sup>380</sup> Ibid, 13

<sup>381</sup> Harber, *Education and International Development*, 251

<sup>382</sup> Sika, *Educational Reform in Egyptian Primary Schools*, 58

change in ministerial cabinets has negatively affected the MOE performance and strategic orientation.<sup>383</sup>

The current strategic plan 2016-2017 states that the MOE is going to expand its efforts in establishing community based education schools.<sup>384</sup> Thus, lots of efforts need to be done by the government, the MOE representatives, INGOs and local NGOs. It is important for all stakeholders to re-visit the objectives of the model, its rational, and its main pillars to help promoting the CBE model with its full potential.

### **Recommendations to the Government and the MOE:**

One of the main recommendations to the MOE is to unify the scattered Ministerial Decrees and regulations regarding establishment of Community Education schools and enrollment policies under one main Decree. Also, there is a great need to ensure that all stakeholders: MOE, INGOs, NGOs respect the conditions related to age and accept only children at the age of 6 if there is no public primary school in the community.

To deal with the insufficient financial resources for management and supervision, governors and local councils could play a role in monitoring CBE schools and follow up on the implementation of the MOE regulations and decrees they are following in their governorates. They should also map the education needs of their governorates.

A data base with accurate information about dropouts in each governorate, and each village is extremely important for future education planning. Such information, if available for the MOE, will help guide INGOs, NGOs on where to design and implement future projects.

A new Decree to address the relationship between the MOE and NGOs is needed instead of the old one that was issued more than 15 years ago and not reflecting the current challenges. There is also a need to build trust between government and NGOs, generally governments feel insecure to accept criticism and advice from NGOs in spite of

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<sup>383</sup> Adel Badr, interview by author, March 3, 2016.

<sup>384</sup> Rizk, *Policies and Regulations of Enrollment*, 8

the declared “partnership.” On the other hand, local NGOs are not strong enough to survive without donor’s financial support and they don’t have a strong community base.<sup>385</sup>

It is also important for the MOE to address the issue of the qualifications of teachers and facilitators selected and appointed for community education schools, also providing enough and appropriate technical supervision and technical guidance is needed.

Communities and NGOs should be allowed more liberty in managing schools; mainly in determining the weekly holidays based of the nature and circumstances of each community.<sup>386</sup>

### **Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations:**

NGOs should provide clear long-term sustainable plans for educational interventions, where these interventions include true capacity building components and real community mobilization efforts. NGOs should help community members to fully understand the importance of their role and encourage them to perform it independently.

High level of coordination with the MOE before the design of interventions is highly needed to ensure that interventions are implanted in the right locations according to needs assessments.

NGOs should also respect and abide by the regulations related to the schools establishment. Awareness campaigns and media campaigns, using different media outlets, are needed to direct the attention of all sectors of the Egyptian society towards the chance community education provide for children who missed education.

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<sup>385</sup> James Manor (2002), Partnerships between governments and civil society for service delivery in less developed countries: cause of concern, 2

There is great need for conducting more research to collect more data and analysis on the CBE experience in Egypt. Creating new methodologies and updating educational materials to help encouraging 'active learning' and 'critical thinking' is deeply needed.

Assessment of previous interventions is very important to learn from previous experiences and improve future implementation.

### **Limitations and Challenges:**

Working on conducting this study had some challenges and limitations: First, as education is a sensitive issue that is considered by the government a "National Security issue," MOE officials, especially at the local level, were somehow reluctant to share their critical opinions.

Second, the initial plan of assessing the performance of the students using the EGRA tool was not possible due to the difficulty in obtaining the MOE approval to perform the test; researcher had to use data gathered through previous studies and observation during the FGMs with girls and facilitators.

Third, convincing facilitators and local officials not to attend the FGDs with girls and not to interfere during the meeting of FGDs with parents and education committees was very hard.

Fourth, most of the available literature on CBE in Egypt is based on the evaluation done at an early stage of the initiative by UNICEF and Malak Zaalouk, which is mainly a documentation of "success", with the exception of CARE; no other INGO has taken the time to assess the situation on the ground.

Another limitation is related to the sample, which is not completely a random sample, it is rather considered as a convenience sample.



Finally, one cannot agree more with Zaalouk that “only quality learning offers a genuine opportunity for change on both individual and structural levels.”<sup>387</sup> Conducting a successful CBE program should be based on an “effective enduring partnerships between local NGOs, Communities, the MOE, and development agencies.”<sup>388</sup> Only when the CBE model is implemented on the basis of its main pillars and according to its main rational and philosophy, it could contribute to being a solution to the current education challenges, and could be again considered as a “second chance” for unprivileged Egyptian children.

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<sup>387</sup>Zaalouk, *The Pedagogy of Empowerment*, 10

<sup>388</sup>Destefano, et al., *Reaching the Underserved*, 19

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